Hafa Adai!

11 hospitalized; 181 new cases. PAGE 2

'Blaming JGO for his legal fees disrespectful to Constitution' PAGE 4

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Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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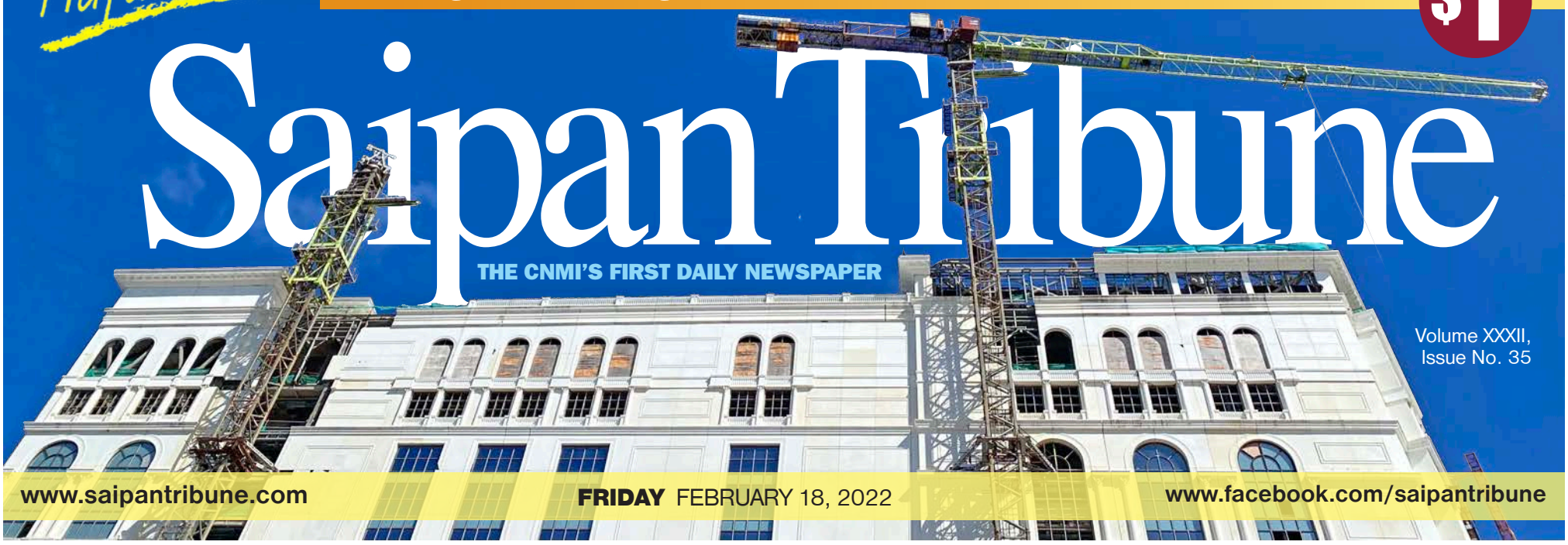


ONE DOWN MARK FARMER

After several months of delays, Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC finally removed one of its cranes at its Imperial Pacific Resort project site in Garapan. Securing and removing the cranes had been met with many problems, including high-speed winds. The Commonwealth Casino Commission earlier expressed concern about the danger the three cranes posed at the construction site.

Temperature logs eliminated

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI is shifting its focus away from contact tracing pursuant to its new mission to prioritize treatment for those severely impacted by COVID-19, this time eliminating the need to record the temperatures of those entering a business establishment.

The Environmental Health Disease Prevention section of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. updated yesterday its guidance for restaurants, bars, businesses that are open to the public, and places of worship. These establishments will no longer be required to enforce contact tracing measures like maintaining records of temperature screenings and requiring

» CNMI shifts focus away from contact tracing

See TEMPERATURE on Page 4

CNMI to receive $50M in EITC credits

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI expects to disburse $50 million in Earned Income Tax Credit following the U.S. Treasury's approval of the Commonwealth's implementation plan.

In an interview with Finance Secretary David Atalig, he said $50 million in credits are expected in the following weeks following

See CNMI on Page 4

2 ethics complaints vs Propst to proceed

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Propst

Manglona

The House of Representatives Special Committee on Official Conduct and Ethics voted yesterday to get more information on one of the complaints against Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) and to proceed with the investigation in another complaint against the lawmaker.

Saipan Tribune learned that the first complaint refers to the

See 2 on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 7:28pm, Feb. 17, 2022

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Additional Dose Vaccinated: **55.2%**

Days since last community transmission: **2**

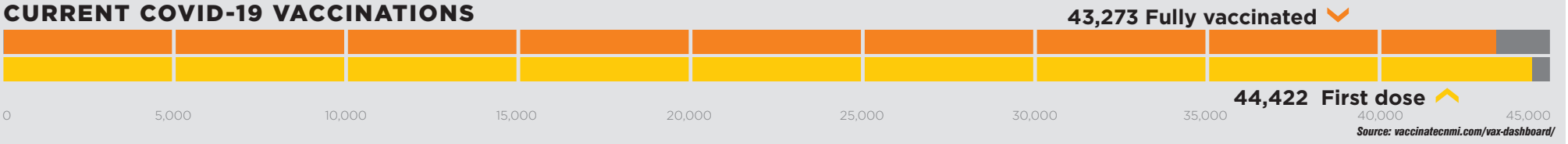
Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	37,959
Fully Vaccinated:	36,957
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,327
Fully Vaccinated:	5,180
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,136
Additional Dose:	20,588

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	41,386	394	41,780
Recovered	35,425	594	36,019
Active	5,052	394	5,446
Deaths	315	0	315

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,746	181	7,927
Recovered	5,882	209	6,091
Active	1,630	181	1,811
Deaths	25	0	25

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

INSIDE

BUSINESS
There is growing evidence that online harassment and cyberbullying are getting worse.
Page 13

NATION
An airplane crashes into a tractor-trailer on a North Carolina highway, killing the pilot.
Page 14

WORLD
Rio de Janeiro government has confirmed 94 deaths from floods and mudslides in Petropolis.
Page 16

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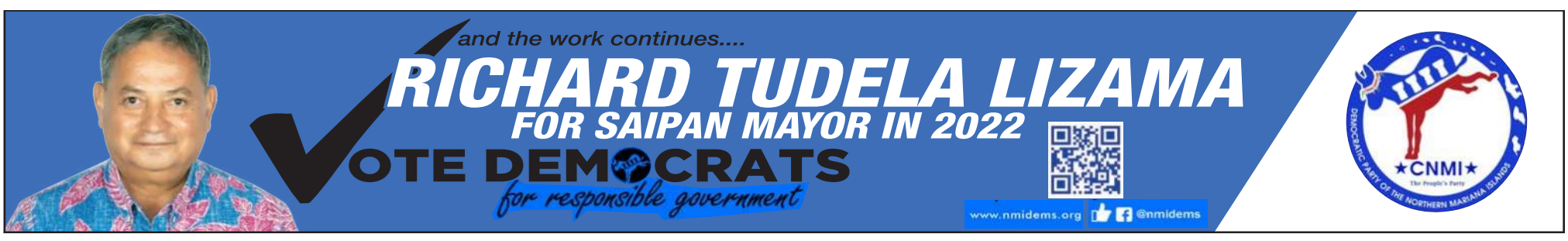
GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com



Local

11 hospitalized; 181 new cases

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. reported late Wednesday that, as of Feb. 16, a total of 11 persons are hospitalized as a result of COVID-19, three of them unvaccinated and eight vaccinated. One of the 11 is on a ventilator.

This comes as 181 new cases were added Wednesday to the CNMI's COVID-19 tally, which now stands at a total of 7,927 cases since March 26, 2020.

Of the 181 cases identified in the community on Feb. 15, 2022,16 were identified on Tinian. The vaccination statuses of the 181 cases are pending verification.

CHCC assured that the 181 new cases have been isolated and are being monitored.

Of the 7,927 total cases that have been identified in the CNMI, there have already been 6,091 recoveries; 1,811 active cases; and 25 COVID-19-related deaths.

A total of 7,310 were identified via community testing, while 617 were identified via travel testing.

A total of 43 COVID-19 vaccine shots were administered on Feb. 16, 2022; of the eligible population, 55% have received an additional dose. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

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‘It’s a struggle for a 76-bed hospital’

With the increased number of hospitalizations arising from the surge in COVID-19 cases in the CNMI and with the Commonwealth Health Center being a small hospital with only 76 beds, one of the concerns is for those with non-COVID issues, according to Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther L. Muña.

Speaking before the House of Representatives Health and Welfare Committee Tuesday, Muña said there are a lot of non-COVID issues so it’s been a struggle for CHCC because CHC is not a big hospital.

She said they started operating a COVID-19 unit at the hospital with only four bed. Then it increased to eight and then 12 beds.

“It just keeps expanding and that means that we have to start reducing some of the beds that we’re utilizing for non-COVID patients,” Muña said.

She said they thought about transferring and opening the Transitional Living Center so see how they can move patients from the psychiatric ward. She said this was in consultation with psychiatrists to ensure that the transition is done in the right way, meeting compliance, and making sure that the patients and families were informed. They, however, did not proceed with that plan as there are certain things that had to be met to ensure compliance, and that it would also require a lot of movement.

Muna said at the Alternate Care Site, they have patients who have to be put on observation because they are COVID-19 patients. That means CHCC has to split its resources between the hospital and ACS.

“We’ve managed to use our other programs to help out, whether in logistics, communications, anywhere they can help basically make sure that we provide support for the medical staff,” she said.

Muña said that, with the change in contact tracing protocols, they’re more attentive to patients’ needs.

Before, when someone’s positive with COVID-19, CHCC’s immediate action was to put that person in quarantine and isolated at a government site.

“That was changed with the cases increasing,” she said.

Muna said everyone at CHCC is exhausted but they will continue to do what they can. ***(Ferdie De La Torre)***

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'Blaming JGO for his legal fees is disrespectful to Constitution'

Rep. Celina Babauta (D-Saipan), who chairs the House of Representatives' Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee, issued the following in response to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' statement last Wednesday, Feb. 16, 2022:

"Gov. Torres's attempt to blame the JGO Committee for over $121,000 in legal fees is utterly disrespectful to our Constitution. It is a perfect example of his failure to take responsibility for his actions and emblematic of his habit of blaming everyone but himself for his misconduct in office.

"We dispute the governor's contention that the JGO is to blame for these private attorney expenses. Although $121,000 in legal fees is significant, the cost to the Commonwealth's reputation is something much harder to quantify.

"To issue a press release blaming the JGO, for his spending thousands of dollars of public funds to defend his clear abuses of power, while in the performance of its constitutional role is not only delusional but disrespectful to the CNMI Constitution. *Insuttu, tai respettu, yan na'mamahlao para guiya para hu sigi sumotne otro taotao pot i malabidåddåña ni i salape' publiko.* What was the public benefit in seeing witness after witness protect the governor at the expense of their own good name? Blaming the JGO for the army of lawyers and their fees, incurred by his administration, is an insult to the intelligence of every taxpayer who is footing the bill for these lawyers who sat by and watched as their clients embarrassed themselves and hurt their own reputations. Perhaps the governor is starting to believe his own lies. Make no mistake, he cannot fool all the people all the time.

"Throughout its investigation, the JGO Committee has respected the right for witnesses to have legal representation. We repeatedly assured the witnesses that they are not the subject of our investigation. In fact, the public has seen how patient and accommodating we all have been in terms of making interpreters available at the eleventh hour, allowing counsels to give advice to their client during the proceedings, and making the process as courteous and efficient as possible. We feel for the witnesses who were obviously pressured into silence and memory failure.

"By refusing to testify under oath and sending his subordinates to fight his fight, the governor disrespects the basic constitutional principle of checks and balances. His betrayal of the public trust and his blatant abuse of public funds is also disrespectful. We, the Legislature, cannot ignore our duty to ensure that the public's money is spent according to the statutes and regulations in place to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of scarce public funds. His record of yearly deficits, now at $314,611,000, since he has been in office, is a testament to his apathetic attitude regarding money that does not belong to him; allowing his utility bills to be in arrears up to $119,000 without disconnection, having the public pay for the water usage for his brother's piggery. If this be his only legacy, he should be ashamed of himself."

In response to the governor's statement, "the hearings did not materialize to any concrete reasons for my impeachment," *esta ha daggen mamaisa gue'*.

"The governor has, time and time again, stated how much he wanted to appear when his number came up. I want to remind the governor that the JGO Committee held him in contempt for intentionally refusing to appear before the committee. He had a duty to comply with the subpoena, just as all the other witnesses complied. What makes him above the law? He was also invited to testify under oath in the absence of a subpoena and despite there being a law that requires him, as a public official, to comply with all investigations, with or without a subpoena, he refused to appear. He has no shame. He has no respect.

"Do you still actually believe that you have nothing to hide? If so, here is some free advice: quit playing games and agree, once and for all, to testify under oath. Until then, stop the press releases, stop the taxpayer funded video interviews, and stop embarrassing yourself and the Commonwealth.

"In the end, the governor's press release last Wednesday was nothing short of the typical gamesmanship to deflect his penchant for Bose speakers, Nikon cameras, GoPros, and foie gras." ***(PR)***

CNMI

From Page 1

the approval of the CNMI's EITC implementation plan last week.

"We're expecting $50 million in EITC credits for our Commonwealth so we're excited about that. The U.S. Treasury just approved our implementation plan. Similar to how we did the stimulus in terms of working with the [Internal Revenue Service], the EITC works the same way," he said.

Atalig said the Division of Tax and Revenue will soon release guidance on how qualified, low-income families in the CNMI can apply for these credits.

"The Division of Tax and Revenue will be coming up with guidance and forms to ensure that when people submit their tax returns, if they're qualified, they'll be able to get these monies. We're talking a lot of money, up to $6,000 per family that can qualify. This is great for the Commonwealth," he said.

Atalig said this year, the American Rescue Plan bill allowed the IRS to reimburse the CNMI completely for EITC credits that will be disbursed.

As soon as the funds come in, Atalig said, Treasury will push them out, similar to how the child tax credit is disbursed.

"The EITC is part of the ARPA bill. We weren't able to implement it last calendar year but we are able to implement it this calendar year. We asked not to upfront the costs because of cash flow. IRS will review and then remit money through us and once we receive the funds, similar to the child tax, then we'll release the EITC. In terms of the regular tax refunds, for those that qualify and get tax refunds, we will be processing it a lot sooner," he said.

Meanwhile, Atalig said the Department of Finance is also working on upgrading its revenue system in order for CNMI taxpayers to file their taxes online.

"We're going to have a contract with a new vendor to upgrade our revenue and tax system and make processes easier by making everything online. Maybe not this calendar year, but next calendar year. We expect to have our people file their taxes online. That's the goal, make processes more efficient and effective," he said.

The EITC credit is an offset against taxes owed. A taxpayer who owes $100 in taxes and has a $70 credit would only have to pay $30.

The EITC is also refundable. This means that any amount of the credit not used to offset taxes owed is paid directly to the tax filer. If no taxes are owed, the entire EITC is paid to the tax filer. In this respect, the EITC is the same as the child tax credit, which was also made fully refundable for 2021 by the American Rescue Plan.

How much each taxpayer receives in EITC depends on several factors, including their age, marital status, number of dependents, and income. Single taxpayers without children, for instance, only qualify if their adjusted gross income in 2021 is less than $21,430. For a married taxpayer with three or more children the adjusted gross income limit is $57,414.

Adjusted gross income (line 11 on the CNMI 1040) is the total of wages, interest, retirement, and other income minus educator expenses, student loan interest, and other allowable deductions.

TEMPERATURE

From Page 1

customers to provide a point of contact for each party.

"Logbooks…have been something establishments were enforcing because they wanted to make sure their staff are safe. I don't think we actually required that. We did it in the beginning before delta but as soon as delta came in, it was just too difficult," said CHCC CEO Esther Muña.

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, so does the CNMI's response, she said. In the beginning, the CNMI focused on contact tracing and protecting the borders. That strategy, she said, has worked out well for the CNMI as it gave the Commonwealth enough time to prepare and get its vaccination rates up. However, now that the delta and omicron variants of the COVID-19 virus have already made it past the CNMI's borders, CHCC and the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force believe the mission has shifted to saving lives and ensuring that the healthcare system is not overwhelmed by the back-to-back surge in COVID-19 cases.

"About contact tracing, we're shifting away from that. Imagine getting over 200 cases per day. That's a lot of people to do contact tracing and yet we're not identifying people who actually really need treatment. That's why we're shifting our focus. We need to be mindful that we're also here to save lives. It's no longer about identifying the initial case and figuring out how did they get it. That's not our primary mission now," Muña said.

According to the new guidelines, temperature screening of all employees and patrons prior to entering the establishment for dine-in services may continue, but the recording of temperatures is no longer required.

Establishments must instead enforce hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, and use of well-fitted face masks by employees when near other employees and customers.

They must also ensure adequate supplies to support healthy hand hygiene practices for both employees and customers.

Establishments are also required to provide physical guides such as tape on floors or sidewalks to ensure that customers remain at least 6 feet apart in queues or ask customers to wait in their cars or away from the establishment while waiting to pick up food.

In addition, signs must be posted on how to stop the spread of COVID-19, how to properly wash hands, provide notice that no one with symptoms will be permitted inside, and how to properly wear a face covering.

Businesses must post "one-way" flow signs for entrance and "one-way" flow signs for exit to maintain crowd control, clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, wash, rinse, and sanitize all surfaces which come in contact with food after each use.

Employers are responsible for sending employees with symptoms home.

Presetting tables must also be discontinued and condiments, utensils, and tableware must be removed from tables.

Restaurants/bars that offer dine-in services must ensure that patrons remain at least 6 feet apart and are encouraged to use outdoor seating whenever possible.

They must also offer self-service food or drinks, such as buffet style dining or beverage refill stations, with precautions in place like the use of disposable gloves and social distancing.

2

From Page 1

one filed last Nov. 9 by Grace "Pitu" Sablan Vaiagae over allegations that Propst had sex with several underaged women approximately 20 years ago when he was still a teacher at Marianas High School and an employee at the Northern Marianas College. Vaiagae is a counselor and an advocate for the rights of abused women.

Vaiagae was among the persons who spoke during the public comment portion of the committee's meeting yesterday.

The second complaint refers to the one filed last Dec. 15 by Robert H. Hunter, the senior policy adviser at the Office of the Governor. Hunter filed the complaint against Propst over the latter's remarks that circulated on social media where he allegedly made physical threats and used inappropriate language against Hunter and other people.

After the Ethics Committee tackled the two complaints against Propst during an executive session yesterday, Rep. Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero (R-Saipan) recommended that they table the first complaint until they could obtain more information from the Department of Public Safety report.

Rep. Sheila J. Babauta (D-Saipan) said that, as discussed during the executive session, the committee would like more information and more discussion, especially with advocates because it is a complex issue that they supportive of.

"We want to support our victims and provide a safe place for them, as well as hold perpetrators' accountable," Babauta said.

She then moved to vote that they table the first complaint pending information from advocates from the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, as well as other advocates in the community.

Babauta underscored the need for committee members to meet with these advocates and discuss ways that they can improve the system for community members and take this opportunity to create lasting change for victims and for the future of the CNMI. All committee members favored Babauta's motion.

With respect to the second complaint, Rep. Leila Staffler (D-Saipan) said that, based on their discussions at the executive session, they find this complaint within their jurisdiction.

"And we would like to proceed with an investigation to find sufficient facts of unethical conduct," said Staffler in moving that the committee proceed with the investigation. All committee members agreed.

Rep. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota), who chairs the committee, requested the House legal counsel to prepare a letter to the parties involved. Manglona said that, based on the rules, the parties have 30 days to respond to the request.

He said he will schedule a hearing when both parties are available.

Manglona said he will finalize the letter that will be sent to the parties next week.

Prior to this meeting, Manglona said he reached out to the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence to schedule a presentation with the members in regards to how they will receive information, especially sensitive information, as well as how they can encourage people to come forward with sensitive information.

Rep. Angel A. Demapan (R-Saipan) asked the House counsel for guidance whether the DPS report requires a motion for a subpoena from the committee or simply just request for the documents.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

GAO: Letting grant assistance to FSM, RMI lapse will mean less funding

The U.S. Government Accountability Office projects that the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands' trust funds that the U.S. contributes will supply less funding than the grant assistance that are ending in 2023 or 2024 and may provide none in some years—leading to annual budget gaps.

According to GAO's report released Wednesday, GAO projects minimal disbursement risks to the Republic of Palau's compact trust fund before fiscal year 2044.

GAO found that Palau relied on compact grants as well as disbursements from its compact trust fund for 13% of expenditures in fiscal year 2019.

As of September 2021, GAO said, the U.S. Department of State, working with the U.S. Department of the Interior, had not set the timeframes to put together the Palau Advisory Group on Economic Reform, which the Palau Compact Review Agreement had said would recommend reforms to enhance long-term economic sustainability.

Latesha Love, director for the GAO International Affairs and Trade, prepared the report on the implications of ending some U.S. economic assistance under the Compact of Free Association.

For this report, Love said, GAO was asked to project the effects of the ending of certain assistance under the compacts as well as the sustainability of compact trust funds disbursements to replace grants and financially support the three nations.

Under the Compacts of Free Association, the U.S. has provided economic assistance to FSM, RMI, and Palau for decades. The U.S. Department of the Interior is scheduled to have provided, in total, $3.7 billion to FSM and $2.5 billion to RMI by 2023 and $803 billion to Palau by 2024.

GAO this U.S. assistance provides as much as one-third of these countries' annual budgets, and includes U.S. contributions to trust funds meant to partly replace grants that will end in 2023 or 2024. The trust funds are meant to provide long-term budgetary support after certain grant assistance ends after fiscal year 2023 for FSM and RMI and after fiscal year 2024 for Palau.

FSM and RMI compact trust fund earnings are intended to provide revenue after compact grant assistance ends. Palau is receiving disbursements from its compact trust fund, which is designed to provide revenue until 2045.

GAO previously found that the FSM and RMI trust funds may not provide sustainable income and recommended that the U.S. Department of the Interior work to develop a trust fund distribution policy to address the funds' sustainability.

GAO also found that the State Department hasn't set timeframes for establishing an advisory group intended to recommend reforms to enhance long-term economic sustainability for Palau.

GAO is recommending that the State Secretary, working with Interior, establish timeframes to constitute the Palau Advisory Group on Economic Reform.

GAO is also recommending that the State Secretary, working with the Department of the Interior, should establish timeframes with milestones to constitute the Palau Advisory Group on Economic Reform before its 2023 termination date.

For FSM, GAO found that the country relied on compact sector grants and a supplemental education grant ending in fiscal year 2023 for 28% of expenditures in fiscal year 2019.

GAO projects that disbursements from FSM's compact trust fund will not cover all of the value of these grants, resulting in annual fiscal gaps.

Because of rules governing the compact trust fund, FSM faces a 36% likelihood of zero disbursements from its compact trust fund in one or more years before fiscal year 2034, even though the fund may have a substantial balance.

For RMI, GAO found that the country relied on compact sector grants and a supplemental education grant ending in fiscal year 2023 for 21% of expenditures in fiscal year 2019.

GAO projects that disbursements from RMI's compact trust fund will not cover all of the value of these grants, leading to annual fiscal gaps.

GAO said because of rules governing the compact trust fund, RMI faces a 12% likelihood of zero disbursements from its compact trust fund in one or more years before fiscal year 2034, even with a projected increasing fund balance. ***(Ferdie De La Torre)***

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The Mobility Space is
Getting Greener
in the Northern Mariana Islands

The mobility space is getting greener in the Northern Mariana Islands, as Enterprise Saipan announced today that it has acquired hybrid vehicles as part of its fleet of vehicles serving Saipan.

This investment not only supports demand for safe and reliable mobility options during the COVID-19 crisis but also demonstrates Enterprise's commitment to supporting local economies and driving forward environmentally friendly modes of transportation across the islands as they move out of travel restrictions.

Enterprise Saipan also upholds its commitment to maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness in the car rental industry through theimplementation of the Enterprise Complete Clean Pledge.

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VcvISION: *"To integrate a seamless workforce development system that meets the needs of employers, job-seekers, workers, and youths in order to supply quality employees for the dynamic economy of the CNMI."*

PUBLIC NOTICE

The CNMI's State Workforce Development Board in collaboration with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core program partners (DOL Workforce Investment Agency, NMC Adult Education State Office, and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation) will be modifying portions of the CNMI's Unified State Plan for Program Years 2022-2023.

Proposed modifications to the plan include:

- A description of current economic, workforce, and workforce development activities impact analyses of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- State strategic goals to achieve the vision of the CNMI "To integrate a seamless workforce development system that meets the needs of employers, job-seekers, workers, and youths in order to supply quality employees for the dynamic economy of the CNMI."
- Performance goals for Program Year 2022 and 2023.
- Update the State Operating Systems for the SWDB and the core programs.

The public is invited to provide input or comments on the proposed changes during a thirty (30) day public comment period beginning February 10, 2022 and ending on March 10, 2022.

There will be virtual and in-person public forums to discuss the modifications and will be announced at a later date.

A copy of the CNMI 2020-2023 Unified State Plan may be found on **www.marianaslabor.net** or **www.ovrgov.net**.

Please submit all comments in writing to **cnmiswdb@dol.gov.mp**, **lorraine.maui@marianas.edu**, or **arlene@ovrgov.net** with the subject line CNMI State Plan 2022. The deadline for comment submission is Thursday, March 10, 2022 at 4:30pm.

/s/ Velma Palacios
Chairperson

Date: February 10, 2022

MISSION: *Empowering, integrating, implementing, and innovating the workforce needs of the CNMI."*

COMMONWEALTH CASINO COMMISSION

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
P.O. Box 500237, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: 1 (670) 233-1857/58 | Fax: 1 (670) 233-1856
Website: www.cnmicasinocommission.com
Email: info@cnmicasinocommission.com

AGENDA

Pursuant to the Open Government Act, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Commonwealth Casino Commission hereby gives notice that the Commission has scheduled its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, February 24, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. at the Commission's 2nd Floor Conference Room at the Springs Plaza in Gualo Rai, Saipan. However, pursuant to Governor Torres' Executive Orders and Directives on the ongoing threat from the COVID-19 pandemic and limited space available, access to the Commission's meeting will also be available via video conference.

The following Agenda will be discussed:

I. PRELIMINARIES:
- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Adoption of Agenda
- D. Adoption of Minutes: January 27, 2022

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

III. REPORTS:
- A. Report by the Acting Chairman
- B. Report by the Executive Director

IV. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS:
- A. Casino Licensee – Imperial Pacific International (CNMI), LLC ("IPI") – Status Updates:
  1. IPI's request for extension of the IGF construction deadline per CLA Amendment #6.
  2. Tower Cranes 1, 5 and 6 at IPR
  3. Employee Payroll and Related Benefits Obligations
  4. Unpaid payroll & severance pay for employees already off-island
  5. IPI's FINAL Annual Audit Report (for the year ended December 31, 2020)
  6. 2020 & 2021 Annual Exclusive Casino License Fees. Due Aug 12th each year
  7. 2020 & 2021 Annual Casino Regulatory Fees. Due Oct 1st each year
- B. Other Miscellaneous Matters.

V. OLD BUSINESS:
- A. Administrative Evidentiary Hearing – Proposed Schedules:
  1. March 28-30, 2022: Complaints #2021-001 through #2021-005

VI. NEW BUSINESS:
- B. Approval of CCC's Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Appropriations Request

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION:
- A. Consult with Legal Counsel
- B. Report by the CCC Divisions
- C. CCC Personnel Matters

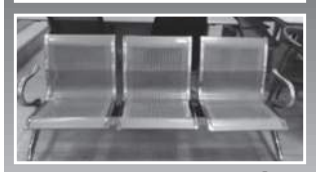
VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The Commission reserves the right to amend this agenda and take action on the amended agenda pursuant to 1 CMC §9910 (b). Pursuant to 1 CMC §9912 (a)(7) and 1 CMC §9912 (c), the Commission may vote to meet in Executive Session. In addition, the Commission may extend its official meeting, if necessary. For those interested in joining or attending the meeting via video conference, please contact the Commission at info@cnmicasinocommission.com for instructions on how to log-in to the conference site.

Rafael S. Demapan
Acting Chairman

GUANGDONG HARDWARE
Never satisfied until you are
NEW ARRIVAL
LAVATORY FAUCET, MIRROR, GARDEN TOOLS, G.I. PIPES, SQUARE TUBES, SHORING JACK PIPE, ROOFING TIN & MANY MORE ABS, CPVC, PVC, CONDUIT PIPES & FITTINGS ARE ALL MADE IN USA ELECTRICAL TOOLS, WATER HEATER & WINDOWS
NEW ARRIVAL
Furniture

Make a Difference for Your House!


NEW ARRIVALS!
VALSPAR PAINT
It's the suitable paint for the island climate. Makes your paint last for a long time!

LED LIGHTS
• Less money, 50% energy saving!
• More stable, bright, and fashionable!
• More longer and environmental protection!
Your Smart Choice!
G60 Rebar is Available Now!
CHEAPEST DEALER OF MAJOR CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL ON ISLAND!
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FAX: 288-4488
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Monday to Saturday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
DISCOVER MasterCard VISA

Muña says omicron sub-variant may possibly be here

Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther L. Muña said Tuesday that the omicron sub-variant that was confirmed over the weekend to be in Guam could possibly be here in the CNMI as well.

Speaking at the House of Representatives Health and Welfare Committee's meeting in the House chamber, Muña said it does take a while for CHCC to receive the sequencing data to show whether or not that the omicron's sub-variant is here. CHCC sends its samples to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for genome sequencing.

Muña said the omicron sub-variant BA-2 is more infectious and could be here because they are seeing several cases of quick transmissions.

»'New treatment for such sub-variant was just approved'

It was committee chair Rep. Christina Marie E. Sablan (D-Saipan) who had asked Muña what they know about the omicron sub-variant that was just reported early this week to have been detected in Guam, and if it's been also detected in the CNMI as well.

It was reported that the Joint Information Center confirmed that the latest set of COVID-19 virus samples sent from Guam to Hawaii for genome sequencing indicates the omicron sub-variant BA.2 is in Guam.

The omicron BA.2 is often referred to as "stealth" because it's harder to detect. Although it's not reported as more severe, BA.2 is more transmissible than the original omicron strain.

Muña, however, assured that they do have treatment for such sub-variant and even a new treatment that was just approved last Monday.

Muña

"So the allocations for the CNMI is coming. We'll be ordering that. And all of them have been shown to be effective for this variant," Muña said.

The CHCC CEO also underscored the importance of getting booster shots. "There's already data showing that, as the months go by, you do see the effectiveness waning down. So we need to be able to try to encourage individuals that if you're due for it [booster], you really do need to take it, get the vaccinations," she added.

When asked how many CHCC staff have themselves been infected by COVID-19, Muña said 120 to 150 out of 900 employees have been infected since the beginning of the pandemic.

Muña said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has already come out with a guidance on strategies to mitigate healthcare personnel staffing shortages during the pandemic, and that per CDC guidelines, CHCC can implement crisis staffing. By crisis staffing, she said, even if the staff are symptomatic and had tested positive for COVID-19, they can still work.

The CEO said they can't just shut down a hospital department where employees are infected, because it's a necessary department.

"Otherwise, CMS [the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services] will come around and say. 'Why are you not providing this service?' So that's when crisis staffing takes effect," Muña said.

When asked for clarification, Muña said Wednesday that she is not aware if they have employees who are symptomatic and are reporting for work.

"[I'm] just saying that, per CDC, if it comes to it, they can be allowed to work," she said. ***(Ferdie De La Torre)***

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM WEBSITE: HTTPS: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport
"Car Rental Concession"
CPA-RFP-007-21
Request for Proposals
for: CPA Concession No. CRS-2021-01

The Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA" or "Authority") is soliciting proposals for the award of one (1) concession granting the privilege to provide motor vehicle rental services to the traveling public (including the provision of insurance related to motor vehicles rented in the operation of such motor vehicle rental services) at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport ("Car Rental Concession"). The successful proposer will be expected to provide motor vehicle rental services in accordance with its concession and concession agreement at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport for a period of approximately two years (contract to end on 5/31/2024) upon entering into a concession agreement with the Authority.

The date of issuance of CPA-RFP-007-21 is **January 13, 2022**, and it can be obtained at the issuing office: CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, Second floor of Arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport.

Proposals must be addressed to Commonwealth Ports Authority, Attn: Car Rental Concessions Evaluation Committee, CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and submitted to and received by the CPA Administration Office (second floor of arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport) **by or before 4:00 p.m. on February 23, 2022**, at which time the proposal period shall expire. Proposals must be accompanied with a non-refundable administrative fee of $100.00 (certified cashier's checks made out to Commonwealth Ports Authority) to defray the costs associated with handling and considering the proposal. Proposals are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to cancel this RFP and to reject any and all proposals in accordance with its Concession Regulations (NMIAC Chapter 40-70).

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

NOTICE TO INCREASE CAPITAL

Please Notice that Vizion Insurance Co. Ltd dba Vizion Insurance intends to increase its capital distribution by One Million Dollars ($1,000,000.00). This Notice is made under 7306 of the CNMI Insurance Code. If anybody has any objection regarding this matter, please send your objection to P.O. Box 503732 CK, Saipan, MP 96950.

/s/ Joselito L. Ranjo /s/ Florefie V. Villaraza

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
MVA-RFP-22-2048

Marianas Visitors Authority Office Space Lease

Submission/Closing Date: **February 24, 2022 Time: 11:00am ChST**
Submit sealed proposal to: Marianas Visitors Authority
Attn: Procurement Office
San Jose Professional Building, Beach Rd., San Jose
P.O. Box 500861Saipan, MP 96950

Interested parties may pick up the RFP package on or after February 10, 2022 at the Marianas Visitors Authority Office, San Jose Professional Building, Beach Road, San Jose, Saipan, during the hours of 8:00AM-12:00PM and 1:00PM-5:00PM., Monday through Friday, except holidays. The RFP package can be emailed to anyone interested. The request via email must reference **"MVA-RFP-22-2048 MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY OFFICE SPACE LEASE"** in the subject line to lmaratita@mymarianas.com

/s/ Ellsbeth Viola Alepuyo
Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors

/s/ Priscilla M. Iakopo
Managing Director, MVA

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM WEBSITE: HTTPS: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport
"Car Rental Concessions"
CPA-RFP-008-21
Request for Proposals
for: CPA Concession No. CRR-2021-01

The Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA" or "Authority") is soliciting proposals for the award of one (1) concession granting the privilege to provide motor vehicle rental services to the traveling public (including the provision of insurance related to motor vehicles rented in the operation of such motor vehicle rental services) at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport ("Car Rental Concession"). The successful proposer will be expected to provide motor vehicle rental services in accordance with its concession and concession agreement at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport for a period of about two years (contract ends on 5/31/2024) upon entering into a concession agreement with the Authority.

The date of issuance of CPA-RFP-008-21 is **January 13, 2022**, and it can be obtained at the issuing office: CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, Second floor of Arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport.

Proposals must be addressed to Commonwealth Ports Authority, Attn: Car Rental Concessions Evaluation Committee, CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and submitted to and received by the CPA Administration Office (second floor of arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport) **by or before 4:00 p.m. on February 23, 2022**, at which time the proposal period shall expire. Proposals must be accompanied with a non-refundable administrative fee of $100.00 (certified cashier's checks made out to Commonwealth Ports Authority) to defray the costs associated with handling and considering the proposal. Proposals are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to cancel this RFP and to reject any and all proposals in accordance with its Concession Regulations (NMIAC Chapter 40-70).

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

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PO BOX 501055•SAIPAN•MP•96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 | FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM | WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

NOTICE OF TOWN HALL MEETING

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) gives notice that a Town Hall Meeting is being held to address matters surrounding the 2020 Audit Report, the Passenger Facility Charges, and the litigation history between Star Marianas Air and CPA.

The Town Hall Meeting will be held on Tinian, Northern Mariana Islands on:

Tuesday, February 22, 2022, 5:00 p.m.,
at the Tinian International Airport's Departure Terminal

Persons wishing to make comments may do so in person or may email them to cpa.receptionist@pticom.com by no later than 4:00pm on **February 23, 2022** (for recordation purposes).

_____/s/_____
CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Power service interruption today in Lower Dandan

There will be a scheduled power service interruption today, Feb. 18, 2022, in portions of Lower Dandan.

The first one is from 9am to 9:30am and 12:30pm to 1pm. Areas affected include Chalan Tun Herman Pan and portions of Flame Tree Road.

This is so that linemen of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. can replace a defective ABS (K1-5) switch and two rotted, leaning primary wooden poles with concrete poles along Flame Tree Road in Lower Dandan.

The complete power outage period is from 9am to 1pm, affecting portions of Chalan Tun Herman Pan, portions of Flame Tree Road and Lower Dandan.

No water well or wastewater lift station will be affected.

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Hotline (236-4333) or monitor CUC's Facebook page for the latest updates. ***(PR)***

February 2022 Kagman High School History Class Museum Tour

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
MUSEUM
OF HISTORY & CULTURE

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Hafa Adai and Tirow! The Covid-19 pandemic has caused enormous challenges in how we live and how we conduct our operations. The increased positivity rates in the CNMI has made the museum take precautionary steps through daily disinfecting of artifacts, exhibits and disinfecting our entire facility including the floors, walls and ceilings. The NMI Museum is also equipped with HEPA Air Purifiers and Covid-19 disinfectant sprays from Reach Solutions that kills 99.99% of Covid-19 viruses and other harmful bacteria.

One of the biggest challenges, has been maintaining the 96-year-old historical building and the preservation of the priceless artifacts it holds. Emergency repairs have been ongoing to avoid injuries to our guests and staff. Recent discovery of cracks on our ceilings, and walls in the main museum gallery were immediately repaired. The guest's restrooms also displayed spalling (rebar expansion) on the ceiling, walls and cracks on the wall tiles.

The NMI Museum continues building and sustaining capacity. The museum diversified its services by conducting its first outreach program (Traveling Museum) spearheaded by Mr. Archie Ajoste. Mr. Ajoste, the museums certified "docent" or museum tour guide is responsible for conducting a brief historical presentation and education of selected artifacts at the various elementary and high schools.

The Traveling Museum outreach has been very successful and getting lots of requests by the various schools. In the future, we will be asking the SNIL delegation for funding for the purchase of a van to utilize transporting the artifacts to the various schools. I want to personally thank Speaker Edmund Villagomez who recently paid for Tasi Tours busing service and made it possible for Kagman High School students to visit the NMI Museum.

Moving forward, you can expect more activities at the NMI Museum. We ask for your patience as we continue to improve and modernize our facility.

Thank you,

Danny Aquino
Executive Director

Emergency Repairs to Museum Gallery - Guest Restrooms

February 2022 Dandan Middle School Chamorro Class Presentation

February 2022 Kagman High School History Class Museum Tour

February 2022 Kagman High School History Class Museum Tour

February 2022 Garapan Elementary School Outreach

February 2022 Koblerville Elementary School Outreach

February 2022 Valentines Paint Night

Military exercise Cope North 22 goes to Rota

As part of Cope North 2022 multinational exercise, the U.S. Air Force's 354th Communications Squadron conducted an exercise to set up a communication flyaway kit and network on Rota in the Northern Mariana Islands last Feb. 15, 2022

Communication flyaway kits allow personnel to work in remote and austere locations to ensure the mission can be completed at anytime and anyplace. Such a network can be set up and configured within an hour if no troubleshooting is required.

The 354th CS manages, operates, maintains and provides command and control communications and computer systems, navigational aids and information management services, supporting the 354th Fighter Wing's combat and combat support missions.

Exercising elements of agile combat employment enables U.S. forces in the Indo-Pacific to operate from locations of varying levels of capacity and support, ensuring airmen and aircrews are ready to respond across the spectrum of military operations.

Exercises such as Cope North allow the Pacific Air Forces to validate new ways to deploy and maneuver assets. This year's Cope North exercise involves the U.S. Air Force, Japan Air Self-Defense Force, and Royal Australian Air Force. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

Senior airman Michael Pleau, 354th Communications Squadron communication flyaway kit technician, stands behind a Hawkeye satellite communications system during Cope North 22 on Rota in the Northern Mariana Islands last Feb. 15, 2022. U.S. AIR FORCE/AIRMAN 1ST CLASS YOSSELIN PERLA

Tech. Sgt. Joshua Lehne, 354th Communications Squadron communication flyaway kit lead, disconnects a wire from a Hawkeye satellite communications system during Cope North 22 on Rota, Northern Mariana Islands, Feb. 15, 2022. U.S. AIR FORCE/AIRMAN 1ST CLASS YOSSELIN PERLA

U.S. AIR FORCE/AIRMAN 1ST CLASS YOSSELIN PERLA

Senior airman Michael Pleau, 354th Communications Squadron communication flyaway kit technician, configures a tactical switch for Air Force network connectivity in support of Cope North 22 on Rota in the Northern Mariana Islands, Feb. 15, 2022.

U.S. AIR FORCE/AIRMAN 1ST CLASS YOSSELIN PERLA

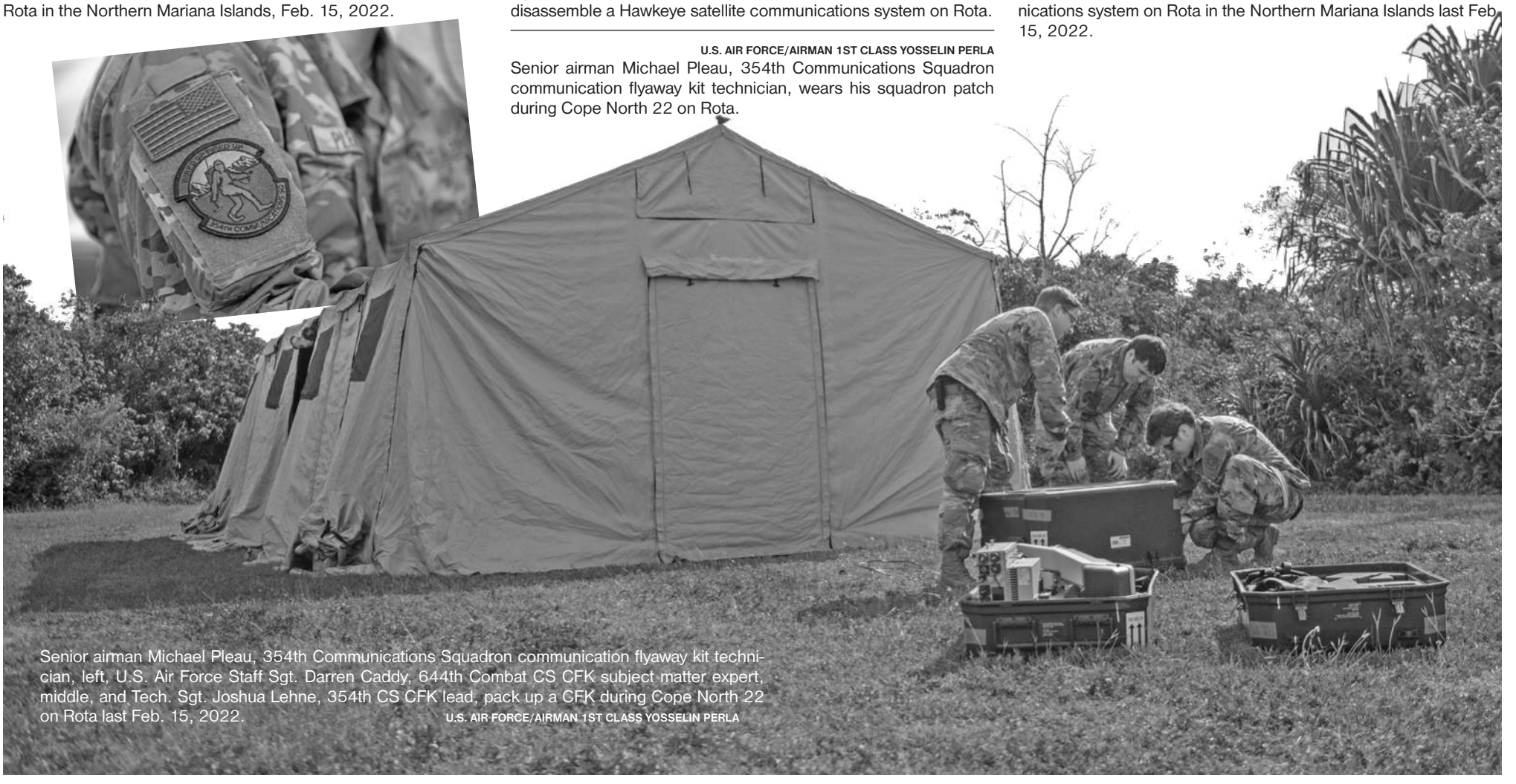
Senior airman Michael Pleau, 354th Communications Squadron communication flyaway kit technician, left, and U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Darren Caddy, 644th Combat CS CFK subject matter expert, disassemble a Hawkeye satellite communications system on Rota.

U.S. AIR FORCE/AIRMAN 1ST CLASS YOSSELIN PERLA

Senior airman Michael Pleau, 354th Communications Squadron communication flyaway kit technician, left, and Tech. Sgt. Joshua Lehne, 354th CS CFK lead, pack up a Hawkeye satellite communications system on Rota in the Northern Mariana Islands last Feb. 15, 2022.

U.S. AIR FORCE/AIRMAN 1ST CLASS YOSSELIN PERLA

Senior airman Michael Pleau, 354th Communications Squadron communication flyaway kit technician, wears his squadron patch during Cope North 22 on Rota.



Senior airman Michael Pleau, 354th Communications Squadron communication flyaway kit technician, left, U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Darren Caddy, 644th Combat CS CFK subject matter expert, middle, and Tech. Sgt. Joshua Lehne, 354th CS CFK lead, pack up a CFK during Cope North 22 on Rota last Feb. 15, 2022. U.S. AIR FORCE/AIRMAN 1ST CLASS YOSSELIN PERLA

Funds available to build grants capacity in insular areas

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs announced yesterday that, in addition to priorities previously announced for funding assistance, grant funding applications will also be considered to develop grant writing capacity, grant administration, and oversight in the insular areas. Applications that support building grant application and management capacity can include training and additional temporary grant staffing and should be submitted under the Technical Assistance Program at http://grants.gov under CFDA number 15.875, by April 1.

Nakoa

"Interior strongly encourages applications from the Insular Areas to build capacity in grant writing and grant management," said Keone Nakoa, deputy assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs. "We want to ensure that the insular areas are equipped and prepared to access federal funds, such as have been made available under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law or the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act."

As announced in January 2022, eligible applicants are insular government entities, educational institutions, or non-profit organizations whose grant proposals are in accordance with 2CFR200 and will directly benefit the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the CNMI, and the U.S. Virgin Islands or the Freely Associated States, which are the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau.

All applicants for federal funding must apply at grants.gov. To find funding available from OIA, search grants.gov using CFDA number 15.875. While the deadline for OIA TAP funding is April 1, 2022, it is highly recommended that applications be submitted as early as possible. Applications related to public safety and emergencies will be reviewed in a timely manner, prior to the April deadline, but must also be submitted through grants.gov as indicated above.

Note that effective April 4, 2022, the federal government will complete its transition to requiring the Unique Entity Identifier on all grant applications in place of the DUNS number. Grant applicants should now begin submitting all proposals with the requisite UEI number; any applications submitted prior to Feb. 14, need not be resubmitted. For more information about the transition to the UEI, visit gsa.gov. The updated Form SF424, that requires UEI's may be found on grants.gov.

Complete instructions on how to apply for discretionary financial assistance programs that are available through OIA may be found at: https://www.doi.gov/oia/financial-assistance. For full instructions on federal grants administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements, visit the online Code of Federal Regulations or 2CFR200. ***(PR)***

» Deadline April 1, 2022

IT&E SUPPORTS RED CROSS GALA CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

IT&E donates $5,000 to the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter last Wednesday at IT&E's office in Chalan Laulau. The money will go toward the Red Cross Gala, which will be held on April 23 at Kensington Hotel Saipan. From left to right are Hans Michelson, Brent Deleon Guerrero, Janice Tenorio, Selmalyn Taitano, Mable Glenn and American Red Cross-NMI Chapter executive director John Hirsh during the check turnover.

CLI - CNMI

A non-profit organization run by and for persons with disabilities

Center for Living Independently in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
#1366 Anatahan Dr. & Guguan Dr.
P.O. Box 5759 chrb
Office: 670-322-4303/04
Cell: 670-287-4303/04
Email: clisusansatur@gmail.com
Fax: 670-322-4307
website: https://clicnmi.wixsite.com/clihome

Tinian Job Vacancy Announcement

Independent Living Skills (ILS) Trainer/administrative assistant

Job Summary: The Independent Living Trainer must have a strong voice for disability rights and independent living, working to assist consumers in maintaining their lives independently in the community. Promotes Disability Partners in the service area and collaborates with community agencies to best assist the consumer to reach goals for independent living.

Job description:
- Assists clients with self-care
- Teaches communication skills
- Trains and assists with community living
- Teaches socialization skills, Increases the client's independence
- Encourages interaction with people without disabilities who are not caregivers
- Provides schedules, routines, environments, and interaction similar to persons without disabilities of a comparable age
- Supports the development of decision-making skills and informed choices in all aspects of daily living
- Assist director and administration duties
- Maintain confidentiality and support privacy at all times.
- Other duties as assigned

Job Qualification:
Degree in Human Services related field or a High School diploma and have at least 2 years of experience in case-management services and/or one year of experience in providing services to persons with disabilities. This position requires excellent written and verbal communication skills, organizational aptitude, and the ability to manage multiple tasks with minimal supervision. Must be available to work a fully flexible schedule as needed.

Documents needed:
Copy of Degree/Diploma, resume, updated police clearance, Valid Driver's License, Covid-19 Vaccination card/record.

RESUME/BIODATA, CURRENT POLICE CLEARANCE, COPY OF VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE, Covid Vaccination record card.

NO PHONE INQUIRIES PLEASE

Please submit resume and documents to clisusansatur@gmail.com or submit to Building 1366 in capitol hill

Closing Date: 4/3/2022

WANTED: SPORTS REPORTER

Hafa Adai! Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

is looking for a sports reporter.

Qualifications:
- First and foremost, must be a fan of all manner of sports;
- Must have a creative flair in writing;
- Comfortable with interviewing people;
- Able to work on weekends and at night;
- Team player.

Perks
- Not a boring 9-to-5 job;
- You'll meet a lot of people;
- Watching sports is your job;
- Up close and personal to the CNMI's biggest sporting event this summer—the Pacific Mini Games 2022.

No writing work experience? We are willing to train! Email your application and résumé to Mia Carreon at mia_carreon@tanholdings.com or drop them off at the HR office on the second floor of the JP Center building in Garapan, Saipan.

WANTED: GRAPHIC ARTIST

Hafa Adai! Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

is looking for a full-time graphic artist.

The ideal candidate must know how to use InDesign, Photoshop, and Illustrator; can work fast and is able to work in a deadline-oriented environment; must be quick to grasp instructions; and must be able to create ad designs, concepts, and layouts based on knowledge of layout principles and esthetic design concepts.

Supercharge your graphic design career by learning the ins and outs of newspaper publishing!

Email your application and résumé to Mia Carreon at mia_carreon@tanholdings.com or drop them off at the HR office on the second floor of the JP Center building in Garapan, Saipan.

Opinion

Hafa Adai
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXII, Issue No. 35

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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Stop tech giants from destroying local news

Journalism is so fundamental to the workings of a democracy that the founders made freedom of the press first in the Bill of Rights. But this industry, so vital to an educated citizenry, is being financially undermined by two monoliths that have taken the content generated by newspapers, TV, radio and others and used it to reap massive profits while refusing to provide any compensation.

Nothing about that is fair, and the repercussions go far beyond the fate of any single newspaper or TV station. Content costs money to produce. Yet two of the biggest consumers and distributors of that news, Facebook and Google, pay nothing to populate their feeds with a steady stream of news from outlets worldwide. Meanwhile, those news outlets are dying at a rapid rate.

And as long as media outlets are left to fend for themselves, there will be little they can do. These digital giants have shown little compunction about just how far they are willing to go. France, in 2021, hit Google with a $593 million fine for its failure to negotiate in good faith with media companies over use of their content, which falls under European Union copyright rules.

When Australia's News Media Bargaining Code became law, with its insistence on fair compensation, Facebook made good on its threat to restrict publishers and people in that country from sharing or viewing news content. That law was an effort to address the vast imbalance of power between the Australian news media and two of the world's largest digital platforms.

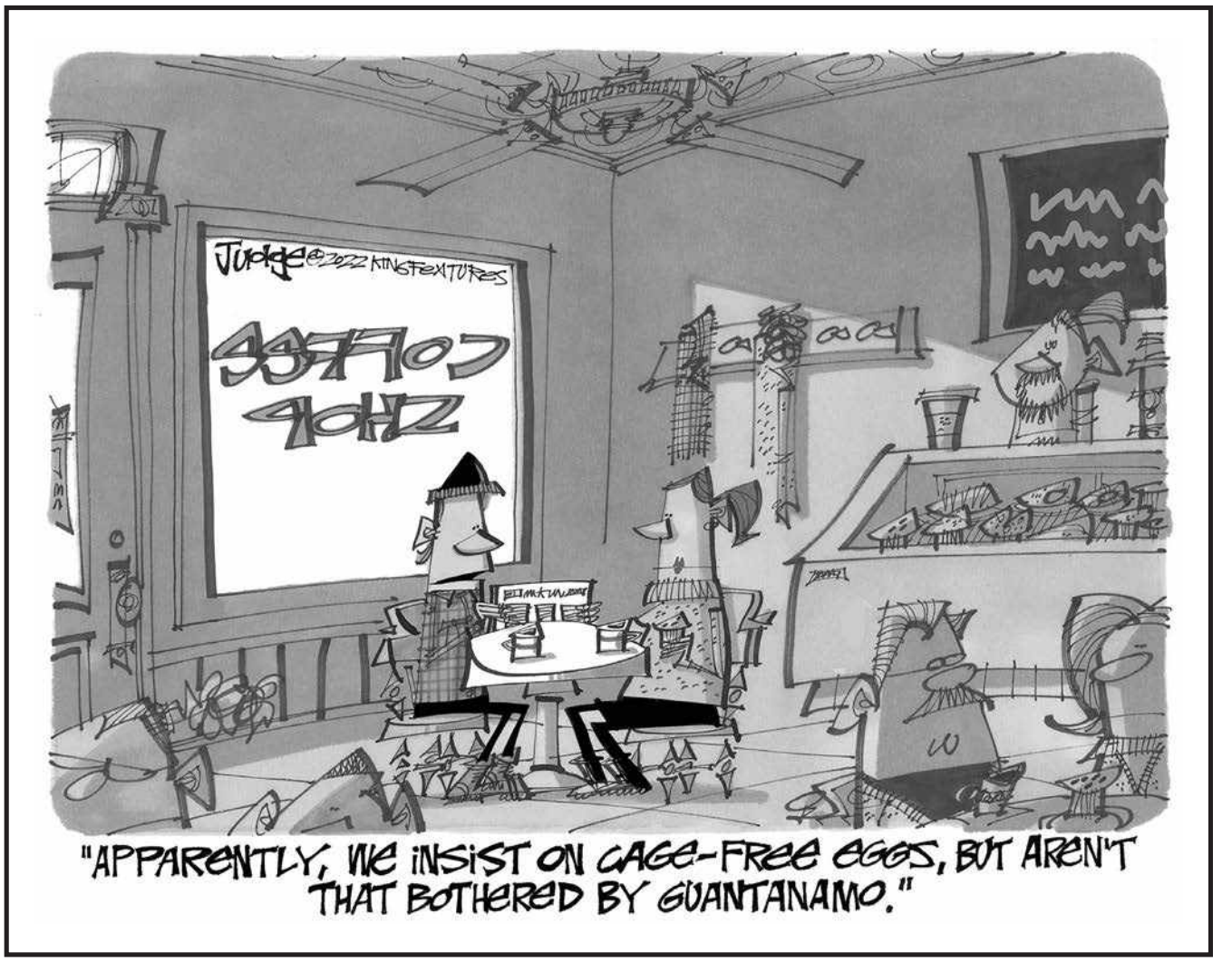
"That showed us what we were in for," Danielle Coffey, executive vice president and general counsel for the News Media Alliance, told an editorial writer. "We are not dealing with willing participants."

That is why the Journalism Competition and Preservation Act (JCPA), a bipartisan effort spearheaded by Minnesota Democratic Sen. Amy Klobuchar and Republican Sen. John Kennedy of Louisiana, is so vital. The act would grant a four-year exemption to antitrust legislation, giving U.S. media outlets, from the largest to the smallest, time and the ability to negotiate as a single entity with the tech platforms that have been cannibalizing them.

Klobuchar, who calls herself the "proud daughter of a newspaper man," is also an expert on antitrust laws and recently wrote "Antitrust, Taking on Monopoly Power from the Gilded Age to the Digital Age." The exemption, she told an editorial writer, is needed to level the playing field against the digital giants.

"We've lost 2,200 local newspapers across the country," she said, including dozens in Minnesota. Why? Not readership, which remains as strong or stronger than ever for many outlets. "It's revenue," Klobuchar said. "It's just like following breadcrumbs to the problem." News revenue plummeted from $37 billion in 2008 to $9 billion in 2020, she said. Meanwhile, "Google and Facebook have become

See STOP on Next Page



Who will pay for Prince Andrew's settlement?

By ADRIAN WOOLDRIDGE
Bloomberg Opinion

Adrian Wooldridge is the global business columnist for Bloomberg Opinion. He was previously a writer at the Economist. His latest book is The Aristocracy of Talent: How Meritocracy Made the Modern World.

The British monarchy is an exercise in defying historical gravity. In 1900, most of the world was governed by royal dynasties. Today, they are a vanishing breed. The Romanovs, Hohenzollerns and Habsburgs have gone up in flames. The Scandinavian royals are mere bicycling monarchs. Britain's royal family is unusual, along with Japan's, in preserving the magnificence if not the substance of power.

The Prince Andrew affair—his entanglement with the pedophile Jeffrey Epstein, the sex trafficker Ghislaine Maxwell and, through them, his accuser, Virginia Giuffre—is the worst thing that has happened to the Windsors since Edward VIII's abdication in 1936.

A month ago, the prince was bravely promising to clear his name in court of charges that he sexually abused and raped Giuffre on three separate occasions when she was 17. On Tuesday, he reached an out-of-court settlement with her in which he agreed to pay a "substantial donation"—estimates suggest that it was in excess of 10 million pounds ($13.5 million)—to her charity supporting the rights of victims of sexual abuse. The terms of the deal prevent either side from discussing the case or the settlement itself in public. The prince didn't issue an apology or admit to any wrongdoing. But he has cleared himself of legal jeopardy by leaving his reputation, such as it was, in tatters. "His final disgrace" was the tabloid headline splashed on The Sun.

The settlement has put paid to any chance of the prince returning to public life. The queen had already prepared for this eventuality last month by stripping him of his military titles and royal patronages. Now, the sidelining will be complete. Whether his premature retirement will be a blow to the monarchy is open to doubt: He and his ex-wife Sarah Ferguson were always clod-hopping at best and embarrassing at worst. Before the current scandal, his nicknames included "Randy Andy" and "Airmiles Andy." On both the occasions that I've encountered him, his performance was subpar: once at the British Embassy in Washington when he gave a grumpy endorsement—or rather anti-endorsement—to Scottish whisky, and, once at Davos, when he stood alone at a bar studiously talking to nobody.

The real question is whether culling a single mangy stag will be enough to save the rest of the herd.

The royal family prides itself on its professionalism, calling itself The Firm and enjoying the assistance of high-flying diplomats and civil servants. But the Prince Andrew affair could hardly have been handled worse. The prince's November 2019 interview with Newsnight's Emily Maitlis was a masterclass in how not to handle a crisis—express no sympathy for a trafficked teenager, make weird claims about not being able to sweat, and boast about growing up in a castle. Powerful courtiers who knew the prince's limitations should have stepped in to prevent it. His legal defense was equally bone-headed: the team, which he put together himself, essentially followed the same failed legal strategy as Maxwell by trying to paint Giuffre as a fortune hunter. Its American rivals, led by David Boies, ran rings around them. Again, the Palace should have stepped in to prevent the debacle.

The payment of such a huge sum also raises troubling questions about the royal finances. Who will sign the check? Prince Andrew's accounts are likely a hopeless mess—and contain the makings of more embarrassing headlines if the press decides to probe them. He certainly can't lay his hands on more than 10 million pounds with any ease. The most likely source of the money is the queen, as some reports are already saying. But that raises even more sensitive questions. Why does she enjoy taxpayer subsidies if she has several million pounds under the bed? And should the head of the British state be buying her son's way out of a sex scandal? Not a good look at a time when living standards are falling and #MeToo sentiments rife.

For now, the royal family is protected by the queen's enormous and enduring popularity, which was founded on her consummate professionalism but is burnished, as she ages, by her fortitude in dealing with life's tragedies, not least the death of her husband last year. Still, she cannot go on forever. Prince Charles is a loose cannon. The finances of his charity, the Prince's Foundation, are under scrutiny: The Metropolitan Police announced it is going to investigate claims it helped to procure honors for a Saudi Arabian citizen. (A spokesman said the heir to the throne had "no knowledge of the alleged offer of honors.") Meanwhile, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex are in the habit, if not the business, of stirring up royal controversies. Opinion polls suggest that younger people are turning against the institution. The furi-

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EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Carolinian Affairs Office joins GCEA's Marianas Village Pride Campaign

TOGETHER, WE CAN
By CECILIA TAITANO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Cecilia Taitano is the Office of the Governor's public liaison officer, the Carolinian Affairs Office's acting executive assistant, and the president of the Commonwealth Women's Association. Taitano is a proud daughter of the CNMI and has been a lifelong passionate and dedicated advocate for preserving and protecting the Carolinian and Chamorro Indigenous cultures and heritage.

There is a lot of beauty and significance in the Refaluwasch heritage, culture, arts, music, and traditions that have influenced our uniqueness to help identify our origin and way of life. Growing up, I was taught to respect and embrace our cultures. I understood what it means to have a great sense of pride and appreciation for who we are as a people. Our elders and generations before me have been the strong guardians of shaping how the Refaluwasch and Chamorro people are today—respectful, embracing, generous, unified in one heart, and supportive of others in times of hardship. Through instilling the values and passing down knowledge unto us, we can pass it down to future generations for them to continue to thrive, exist and preserve our cultures.

Working with the Carolinian Affairs Office has allowed me to share my thoughts and ideas on what we can do for our community. This year, we were fortunate enough to bring in more staff, which will allow the CAO to plan and execute more programs and projects. Some highlights include building our new website with assistance from the Office of Information Technology, launching our outreach program and survey, offering clinics for traditional Refaluwasch dance and song, and more.

Last year, the CAO, United Carolinians Association, and the Commonwealth Women's Association hosted the Project Liffang. It provided local artists and entrepreneurs a place to showcase their talents and market their arts, crafts, and goods to the community for profit. The project empowers participating entrepreneurs to be self-sufficient.

We hope to reopen Project Liffang when it is safer for the community. This year will be more exciting. The CAO and the Pacific Mini Games organizers met to discuss plans to strengthen our partnership and open Project Liffang during the games. This will give our community and visiting athletes the opportunity to experience our beautiful and diverse cultures and traditions and support our local artists and vendors.

We also look forward to working closely with the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers' Marianas Village Pride Campaign. The council places importance on promoting the Marianas' unique cultures and languages and showing pride in our villages and way of life. They also provide exciting and interactive ways for our community to showcase their village pride and get involved. The CAO was inspired by this community movement and has committed to showing our cultural pride by building more Carolinian utts at the CAO grounds so that organizations can use it to highlight traditional arts and culture.

We appreciate our partnership with GCEA and welcome our brothers and sisters throughout the Marianas to join us. Let's work together to safeguard, protect, and preserve our cultures, heritages, and identities as a community.

We also need to support the sustainable development of our economy, resources, and lands to help protect and look out for the best interests of our successors—the future generations of the Marianas. Our joint efforts now can ensure that our people prosper in the future!

Together, We Can!

For more information, visit the GCEA at cnmieconomy.com, on Facebook and Instagram (@cnmigov.economy), or contact them at gceacnmi@gmail.com.

Put an end to wrongful elder evictions

By BILL LUEDERS
Progressive Perspectives

Bill Lueders is editor of The Progressive. *This column was produced for the magazine's* "Progressive Perspectives" *project and distributed by Tribune News Service.*

In late October, my 97-year-old mother was evicted from the senior care facility in New Berlin, Wisconsin, where she had lived for a decade. It happened from one day to the next, in an apparent violation of state law. My family had to scramble to find her a new place to live.

Like the federal law governing nursing homes nationwide, Wisconsin law requires providers including the Regency, where my mother lived, to give residents 30 days advance notice before an involuntary discharge. We received no such notice and, as I learned in researching an article on this subject, most people evicted from nursing homes and other long-term care facilities don't.

"It is rare for a resident to ever get 30 days' notice," Tony Chicotel, a staff attorney for California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform, told me. That's because doing so involves informing residents of their right to appeal, which facilities don't want because residents who do appeal usually win.

As Chicotel put it, "The benefits of breaking the law are greater than the cost of breaking the law. So, consequently, you get a lot of law-breaking." (The article can be found at progressive.org/magazine/evictingelderly-lueders or as a downloadable PDF at progressive.org/evicting.)

What happened to my mother, it turns out, happens to elderly people in this country all the time.

On Nov. 18, the day after we moved our mom into a new residence, the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released a 40-page report on "facility-initiated discharges." It noted that these have for years been the single most frequent complaint received by the federal Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, which works to resolve problems for individuals living in these facilities.

According to the report, "police found one resident on the streets after a nursing home discharged him to an unlicensed boarding house without notifying his family." An attorney with the Michigan Elder Justice Initiative told me her group has seen cases in which elderly residents were approved for discharges to a homeless shelter and to a house that had burned down. Often residents are barred from returning after being sent outside the facility for medical reasons, as happened with my mom.

Sadly, state and federal laws requiring advance notice and imposing certain rules on "facility-initiated discharges" have been allowed to atrophy into irrelevance, because they are so seldom enforced. And even then, the penalties are so nominal that providers are willing to accept them as a cost of doing business.

In my mom's case, I filed a grievance with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, contesting the stated reasons for my mom's eviction. I noted that "there is a reason, and a good one at that," for requiring 30 days advance notice. "It's to prevent providers from putting families in the predicament that (the facility) has put us."

The state investigated, and, in mid-November, a division supervisor assured me that there "absolutely" would be an enforcement action taken by the state. "In this case, they'll be put on notice that a violation occurred," I was told. "They'll be charged fines."

As of this writing, no enforcement action has been announced.

This is an issue that regulators on the state and federal level need to take more seriously. They should be delivering swift consequences to violators, including the "significant financial penalties" Chicotel says are needed when facilities break the law.

Our seniors deserve better than to be tossed out of their homes because a provider has decided they have become too much work.

SETTLEMENT

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ous reaction on Twitter to Prince Andrew's out-of-court settlement suggests that the sleeping beast of republicanism may be beginning to awaken.

To secure its long-term survival, the Firm needs to do more than lock Prince Andrew in a castle and hope that the public will forget about him. It needs to learn some lessons from this whole sordid affair. It needs to prune the royal tree severely—stop funding minor royals (who are always a potential source of scandals) and focus exclusively on the direct heirs to the throne. It still galls that Prince Andrew's younger daughter Eugenie was treated to an all-singing-and-dancing royal wedding at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle: She's only 12th in line to the throne. Better professionals must be hired to improve the operation of the royal machine—as well as appointing courtiers who have a passing acquaintance with the 21st century.

Defying gravity requires constant self-reinvention as well as ceaseless effort. Falter for a moment and you plummet, painfully, to Earth.

STOP

From Page 10

advertising titans, with a combined worth of $2.4 trillion."

Their actions in Europe and Australia, she said, "are what monopolies do. That's why a bill is necessary. This would just allow everyone to work together so that the small newspaper in Lanesboro that's trying to negotiate with Facebook can get a fair shake."

The situation has become dire. Since 2004, the U.S. has lost one-fourth of its newspapers, according to the University of North Carolina Hussman School of Journalism and Media. That includes 70 daily newspapers and more than 2,000 weeklies or non-dailies that operate in smaller communities. Nationwide, 1,800 of the communities that have lost a paper do not have easy access to any local news source, including radio or online.

Klobuchar said that to maintain the independence of news media in this country, "they must be given a chance to compete fairly and to get compensation for what they produce."

Full disclosure here: The Star Tribune, which is profitable now, would benefit from such legislation, but to no greater extent than any other media outlet. "This would be across the country," Michael Klingensmith, publisher and CEO of the Star Tribune, told an editorial writer. "Any producer of news, including broadcasters, newspapers, radio, news websites would benefit. It is simply payment for access."

Klingensmith noted that even subscription paywalls have been compromised by search engines' ability to grab snippets of news. It is also not fair to subscribers, who pay for their news while the two largest tech platforms' refuse to do the same.

The Alliance's Coffey said a couple of elements stand out in this legislation compared with other countries. "Republicans don't want heavy-handed regulation," she said. "It's very important to us that this be a bipartisan bill. The government here is not deciding anything. We also have made sure that anything we do would be as a collective, so that every [media] outlet will benefit in proportion to its contributions and based on market value." Refusal to negotiate, she said, would result in civil penalties.

The founders of this country intended a free and independent press to be the watchdogs of our society. Is it a perfect system? No. But to lose that is to become dependent on knowing only what those in power—at every level—wish us to know.

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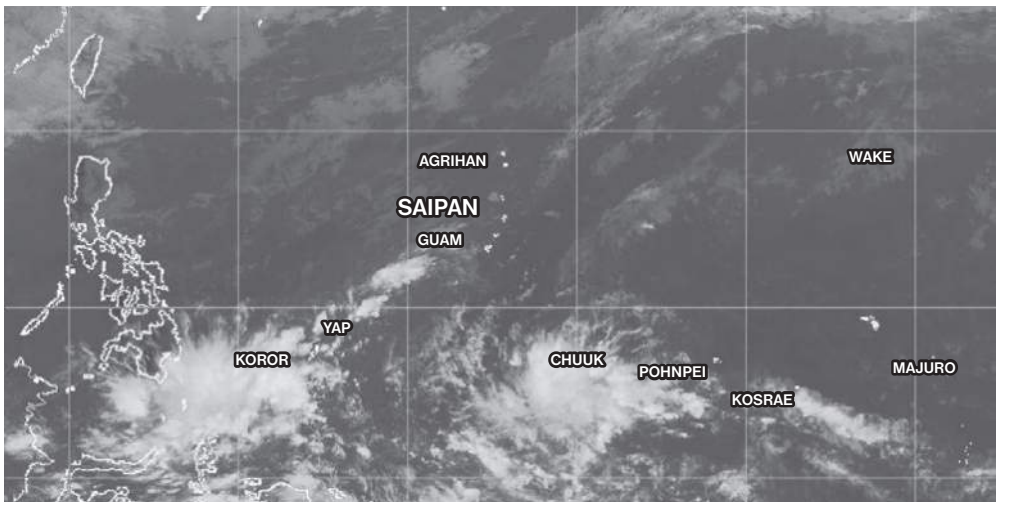
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly sunny and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
86º 75º	85º 76	86º 75º	86º 75º	86º 75º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:26 AM, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Guam Doppler weather radar shows isolated showers over Guam and Rota waters, and south of Guam waters. Infrared satellite indicates a trend for warming cloud tops, meaning the showers are devolving. The Ipan buoy reveals combined seas of 6 to 7 feet, composed mainly of a northeast trade-wind swell with a 13 or 14 second period. The USGS temporary buoy shows a north-northwest swell of 4 feet with a 13 second period. It`s possibly that these are two different views of wraparound from the same swell. In that case, it would seem the higher height at Ipan means it`s closer to the direction, so probably from the north-northeast in that case.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	29 / 25 °F
Palau	Thunderstorms	29 / 26 °F
Yap	Partly Cloudy	29 / 26 °F
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	30 / 27 °F
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	30 / 26 °F
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy/Wind	30 / 27 °F
Majuro	Mostly Sunny/Wind	29 / 27 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	06:40 AM	18:21 PM
Saturday	06:39 AM	18:21 PM
Sunday	06:39 AM	18:22 PM
Monday	06:38 AM	18:22 PM
Tuesday	06:38 AM	18:22 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	07:43 PM	19:45 PM
Saturday	-	08:22 PM	20:37 PM
Sunday	-	09:00 PM	02:51 PM
Monday	-	09:39 PM	03:36 PM
Tuesday	-	10:21 PM	04:24 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	24 / 18 °F
Beijing	Cloudy	3 / -9 °F
Hong Kong	Cloudy	18 / 13 °F
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	27 / 20 °F
London	AM Light Rain/Wind	12 / 4 °F
Los Angeles	Sunny	23 / 9 °F
Manila	Partly Cloudy	33 / 24°F
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	20 / 13 °F
Miami	Partly Cloudy	26 / 20 °F
New York	Partly Cloudy	18 / -3 °F
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	9 / 1 °F
Paris	Light Rain/Wind	13 / 4 °F
Busan	Partly Cloudy	9 / 4 °F
Rome	Partly Cloudy	18 / 10 °F
Salem	Mostly Sunny	13 / -0 °F
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	18 / 6 °F
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	4 / -5 °F
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	11 / 1°F
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny/Wind	13 / 3°F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
02:49 AM	Low Tide	-0.26
09:29 AM	High Tide	1.74
3:14 PM	Low Tide	0.81
8:25 PM	High Tide	1.75

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 14, 2022

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	6:30am	8:20am	1, 3, 5
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 30)
TW9308	3:30PM	7:20PM	4, 7
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

BX621	3:10PM	6:30PM	7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA116	8:00am	8:46am	7
UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	2, 4, 7
UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/116	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
UA184/116	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 7 via Guam
UA184/116	10:55pm	8:46am+1	6 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 30)
TW9307	9:00AM	Q2:30PM	4, 7
OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	3, 6

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

BX622	8:00AM	1:10PM	7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

Online harassment, real harm: Fixing the web's biggest bug

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP)—It should have been a time of celebration: Brittan Heller would soon graduate from college and head to one of the nation's top law programs.

But when a classmate with unrequited feelings for Heller wasn't admitted to that same school, he turned his rage on her. He wrote a manifesto titled "A Stupid B---h to Attend Yale Law School" and posted it on a site popular with anonymous trolls. The man urged them to do their worst.

Soon strangers were making derogatory, sexualized comments and posting her pictures online. They made threats. Posted her personal information. At one point, FBI agents escorted Heller to class for her protection.

"People say, 'Oh, just log off. Don't read it. Turn off the computer,'" said Heller, who turned her personal experience from 15 years ago into a legal specialty as a leading expert on online harassment. "This the 21st century, and people have a right to use the internet for work, for pleasure or to express themselves. Telling people not to read the comments is no longer enough. We don't talk enough about this problem, and we need to."

AP

Tina Meier, founder of the Megan Meier Foundation, poses for a photo in the foundation's office Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2021, in St. Charles, Mo. Meier's daughter, Megan, committed suicide in 2007 at the age of 13 after being harassed by a "friend" on MySpace who later turned out to be the mother of a classmate who was using the fake account to bully the unsuspecting teen.

Online harassment has become such a familiar part of the internet that it can be hard to imagine the web without it. From teen cyberbullying to authoritarian governments silencing dissent, online toxicity is a fact of life for everyone, with women, teens and religious and racial minorities the most likely to be targeted.

And there is evidence the problem is getting worse.

In 2014, 15% of Americans said they had faced severe or significant online abuse, defined as stalking, physical threats, sustained harassment or sexual harassment. In 2021 the number was 25%, according to studies by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Health care workers, journalists, teachers, police and government workers have all reported increases in online harassment in recent years, as the pandemic and political polarization led many people to release their anger and fear online.

Nearly three in four female journalists reported receiving threats or other forms of online harassment, according to a survey by UNESCO and the International Center for Journalists that polled more than 700 journalists in more than 100 countries. One in five of those said the harassment escalated to offline abuse or even assault.

The growth of the internet has also expanded the ways that people can be targeted beyond merely email to social media posts, direct messages, texts and streaming video. And with the rise of smartphones and cheap, ubiquitous internet, harassment can now be a 24-7 problem for victims.

"We've made so many strides—there's more awareness now—but it's easy to get frustrated and to feel like we've gotten nowhere," said Tina Meier, who started a foundation to teach kids and parents about online harassment after her daughter's suicide in 2006.

Thirteen-year-old Megan Meier had been bullied by someone she met online who she thought was a teenage boy named Josh. The two had flirted until the person suddenly turned against Megan. "Everybody hates you," "Josh" wrote. "The world would be a better place without you."

Police later determined that "Josh" was actually an adult woman, the mother of one of Megan's classmates.

While polls show all types of people are susceptible to online harassment, extensive research has shown that women and people of color are far more likely to be targeted. That's also true for people with disabilities, people who belong to religious minorities and members of the LGBTQ community.

FAA head resigns after effort to rebuild agency's reputation

By DAVID KOENIG
AP AIRLINES WRITER

The leader of the Federal Aviation Administration, whose agency has been criticized for its oversight of Boeing and handling of questions surrounding 5G interference with aircraft, said Wednesday he will step down March 31.

Stephen Dickson, a former pilot and executive with Delta Air Lines in Atlanta, had led the FAA since August 2019. He citied separation from his family during the pandemic, saying he told President Joe Biden, "It is time to go home."

Dickson

In a letter to FAA staff, Dickson said he was proud of his tenure.

"The agency is in a better place than it was two years ago, and we are positioned for great success," he said.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, whose department includes the FAA, said the 64-year-old Dickson "has been the FAA's steady and skilled captain."

In a statement, Buttigieg said Dickson's tenure "has been marked by steadfast commitment to the FAA's safety mission ... and his lifelong dedication to making sure our aviation system is the best and safest in the world."

The White House had no immediate comment on a successor.

The FAA's reputation was battered before Dickson became administrator. The agency was questioned about how it approved the Boeing 737 Max and criticized for not grounding it after the first of two deadly accidents in 2018 and 2019.

When the CEO of Boeing seemed to pressure the FAA by saying several times that the agency would soon clear the plane to fly again, Dickson pushed back in November 2019.

Dickson released a video in which he told FAA technical experts: "Now I know there's a lot of pressure to return this aircraft to service quickly ... I want you to take the time you need and focus solely on safety. I've got your back."

The FAA finally cleared the plane in late 2020 after grounding it for nearly two years while Boeing overhauled an automated flight-control system that played a role in the crashes.

However, that did not end criticism over the FAA's oversight of Boeing. Relatives of passengers who died in the Max crashes pushed for Dickson's removal. Last week, Democrats who lead the House Transportation Committee and its aviation subcommittee asked for an inspector general's report into why the FAA didn't take more enforcement action against Boeing for problems with the plane.

Also in recent weeks, the FAA has been swept up in controversy over whether new high-speed wireless service from AT&T and Verizon can interfere with instruments on planes. Under pressure from the FAA, the Transportation Department and the White House, the telecommunications companies agreed to delay their rollout of the service near busy airports. Critics, however, said the FAA was slow to take up the issue.

Fed: Faster rate hikes are likely if inflation stays high

WASHINGTON (AP)—Federal Reserve policymakers concluded last month that they would accelerate their tightening of credit if inflation failed to slow in the coming months.

Most officials agreed that faster interest rate hikes would be needed "if inflation does not move down" as the Fed's policymaking committee expects, according to the minutes of the central bank's late January policy meeting, which were released Wednesday.

The minutes underscore the urgency that the Fed under Chair Jerome Powell feels about reining in a sharp spike of inflation, which has persisted longer and broadened to more industries than the policymakers had expected. As recently as December, Fed officials forecast that inflation, based on their preferred measure, would fall to an annual rate of 2.6%. It is currently 5.8%.

Most analysts expect Fed officials to raise that forecast at their next meeting, in mid-March, to reflect the acceleration of consumer prices. Inflation has reached its highest pace in four decades, hammering household budgets and wiping out the benefit of rising wages.

Fed officials are expected to raise their benchmark short-term rate several times this year beginning in March. But economists have increasingly suggested that the Fed has waited too long to unleash its inflation-fighting tools.

"The Fed is behind the curve," said James Orlando, senior economist at TD Economics. "It needs to catch up, which will hopefully cool some of the inflationary froth."

At a news conference after their Jan. 26 meeting, Powell said Fed officials would have "humility" and be "nimble" in their rate decisions. He also said then that the policymakers are "of a mind to raise the federal funds rate at the March meeting, assuming that conditions are appropriate for doing so."

A number of Fed officials have acknowledged recently that inflation has proved worse than they expected. And the minutes of the January meeting noted that officials "remarked that recent inflation readings had continued to significantly exceed the (Fed's) longer-run goal and elevated inflation was persisting longer than they had anticipated."

The minutes also underscored a point Powell made at his news conference last month: With the economy growing at a healthy clip and with unemployment at just 4%, the Fed can raise rates at a much faster pace this time than it did in 2015-2018, when it carried out no more than four hikes each year.

Investors are anticipating seven quarter-point rate hikes this year, according to futures markets, up from just four a month ago.

Japan's deficit reaches 8-year high as energy imports soar

TOKYO (AP)—Japan racked up a 2.2 trillion yen ($19 billion) trade deficit last month, an eight-year high, as the cost of energy imports soared, the government said Thursday.

The Finance Ministry said exports edged up 9.6% in January from the same month the previous year. Imports jumped 39.6%, resulting in the sixth straight month of trade deficits, it said.

The amount is the biggest since January 2014, when the trade deficit totaled nearly 2.8 trillion yen.

Koya Miyamae, a senior economist at SMBC Nikko Securities, said the trade deficit tends to rise in January because of the New Year's holidays, which pushes exports down.

"But even taking that into consideration, the deficit is huge," he said.

Japan imports almost all its oil and gas. Prices have soared to multi-year highs recently, adding to global concerns about inflation. Tensions in Ukraine amid worries about a Russian invasion have pushed prices still higher.

Meanwhile, Japan's currency, the yen, has weakened against the U.S. dollar as the Federal Reserve prepares to raise interest rates to counter inflation. Higher rates tend to push the dollar higher against other currencies because they create more demand for dollar-denominated investments.

Exports have not risen as quickly as imports as manufacturing of electronics and autos has been slowed by shortages of computer chips resulting from pandemic-related disruptions in some countries.

Nation

Plane crashes into tractor-trailer on North Carolina highway

LEXINGTON, N.C. (AP)—An airplane crashed into a tractor-trailer on Wednesday on a North Carolina highway, killing the pilot and sparking a small fire, the N.C. State Highway Patrol said.

The Federal Aviation Administration said a twin-engine Beechcraft Barron crashed into the tractor-trailer on Interstate 85 South, near the Davidson County Airport in Lexington at around 5:35 p.m.

Early reports indicate the plane was taking off from the airport when it lost altitude and crashed into the southbound tractor-trailer. The name of pilot wasn't released Wednesday night pending notification of relatives, the patrol said.

The FAA said it would investigate the crash along with the National Transportation Safety Board, but provided no additional details.

AP

Emergency personnel work at the scene where a twin-engine Beechcraft Barron plane crashed into the tractor-trailer on Interstate 85 South, near the Davidson County Airport in Lexington, N.C., Wednesday, Feb. 16, 2022.

News outlets report the driver of the tractor-trailer was taken to a Winston-Salem hospital for treatment of minor injuries, officials said.

Video footage from the scene showed both the tractor and trailer on its left side. The tail section of the aircraft was seen next to the overturned rig. Video also showed firefighters spraying water as flames burned the ground next to I-85 with some debris scattered on the road.

US investigators: Zinke misused his Interior secretary job

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP)—Former U.S. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke misused his position to advance a commercial development project that included a microbrewery in his Montana hometown and lied to an agency ethics official about his involvement, federal investigators said Wednesday.

The investigation by the Interior Department's inspector general found that Zinke continued work on the commercial project through a nonprofit foundation in the resort community of Whitefish even after he committed upon taking office to break ties with the foundation.

Zinke, who is now running for Congress, also gave incorrect and incomplete information to an Interior Department ethics official who confronted him over his involvement and ordered agency staff to help him with the project in a misuse of his position, according to the investigator's report.

Zinke

The Great Northern Veterans Peace Park Foundation was created by Zinke and others in 2007 to build a community sledding hill in Whitefish, a tourist town about 25 miles (40 kilometers) from Glacier National Park and near the Montana-Canada border. The BNSF Railway company donated several acres of land to the foundation in 2008 to establish the park.

After being named Interior secretary in 2017, Zinke agreed to stop providing the foundation with his services.

But after resigning as the foundation's president and while he was employed as the Interior Secretary, Zinke engaged in "repeated, ongoing substantive negotiations" with developers about the use of foundation property for the commercial project known as 95 Karrow, investigators said.

Zinke's campaign blasted the investigative report as "a political hit job" and said in a statement that the involvement of Zinke's family with the foundation led to the restoration of railroad land into a park where children can sled.

"They are proud of the children's sledding park that dozens of kids use every weekend and countless locals use for exercise every day," the statement said. Zinke is far outpacing his rivals in fundraising ahead of the June 7 Republican primary for an open Montana congressional seat—the position he held before joining former President Donald Trump's cabinet.

The department's inspector general's office—led by a Trump nominee, Mark Greenblatt—referred the results of the Zinke investigation to prosecutors. Federal prosecutors working under Attorney General Merrick Garland, who was appointed by President Joe Biden, declined to pursue criminal charges last summer, the report said.

Zinke and his wife, Lola, declined interview requests from federal investigators looking into the land deal.

But emails and text messages from others who were involved in the development project show Zinke continued to communicate with developers even after resigning from the foundation in March 2017, according to investigators. The messages were obtained through subpoenas to the developers, who were not named.

Baptisms by an Arizona priest presumed invalid due to error

PHOENIX (AP)—The priest was beloved by his parishioners—yet for years he made a one-word ritual mistake, repeatedly, that has caused confusion and anxiety for thousands of Catholics in the Phoenix area now worrying that they were improperly baptized.

Under scrutiny are baptisms performed by the Rev. Andres Arango, who served in Arizona for 16 years. Catholic officials estimate that thousands of baptisms are now presumed to be invalid because he used incorrect wording, and they say those affected may need to be re-baptized. Some may feel obliged to have other church ceremonies performed again, even including marriage.

Arango's error was in saying, "We baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," when he should have begun the sentence by saying, "I baptize you." The difference is theologically crucial, the Vatican ruled in 2020, because it's not the "we" of the congregation doing the baptizing but the "I" of Jesus Christ, working through the priest.

Arango served in three parishes in metro Phoenix from September 2005 until his resignation Feb. 1, most recently at St. Gregory, where parishioners credited him with reversing a worrisome drop in membership.

"Without his heartfelt kindness, care, concern and shepherding, physically and spiritually, our church and school would be nonexistent," said Mona Shelley, a lifetime member of the parish. She said Arango had returned to the church several times since his resignation to perform re-baptisms with the proper wording.

Fellow parishioner Christina Moishe Collins, who is also a cantor at St. Gregory, said Arango received a standing ovation after his final service there, and people waited outside with banners to thank him and show support.

"I don't see him doing this with malice in any manner," she said. "Father Andres is an amazing priest and he may have made a mistake, but that doesn't change the fact that he really cares about his parishioners and really, truly, lives his faith."

Even a parishioner directly affected by a botched baptism, Eliana Najera, said she is grateful to Arango for his ministry and wishes he could return. Najera's 13-year-old daughter, Alysson, was baptized by Arango at another church and will be re-baptized at St. Gregory next week.

"As a mother I feel bad because all of these years I allowed her to receive Communion," Najera said, referring to another sacrament that requires the recipient to first be baptized. "I have more questions than answers."

The Diocese of Phoenix is trying to identify people baptized by Arango. It has set up an FAQ section on its website to confront issues related to the botched baptisms and created a form for people to fill out to start the process of getting re-baptized.

ACROSS THE NATION

Officer charged in Floyd killing says he deferred to Chauvin

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP)—A former Minneapolis police officer charged in George Floyd's killing testified Wednesday that he deferred to Derek Chauvin because he was his senior officer and that's what he had been trained to do. J. Alexander Kueng is one of three former officers charged in federal court with violating Floyd's constitutional rights when Chauvin pressed his knee into Floyd's neck for 9 1/2 minutes as the 46-year-old Black man was handcuffed, facedown on the street. Kueng knelt on Floyd's back, Thomas Lane held his legs and Tou Thao kept bystanders back. Kueng testified that he was concerned about their inability to stop Floyd from thrashing around as they tried to arrest him after police responded to a 911 call about Floyd using a counterfeit $20 bill at a corner store. He said that when Lane suggested changing the restraint, Chauvin disagreed. "He was my senior officer and I trusted his advice," Kueng said.

Hate crimes trial in Ahmaud Arbery killing enters 4th day

BRUNSWICK, Ga. (AP)—The federal hate crimes trial of the three men convicted of murdering Ahmaud Arbery enters its fourth day Thursday, with the jury returning to court after hearing testimony that two of the defendants frequently used racial slurs. Prosecutors were scheduled to continue calling witnesses Thursday in U.S. District Court in the port city of Brunswick. Arbery, 25, was fatally shot just outside the city limits nearly two years ago. The white men who pursued him are charged with violating his civil rights and targeting him because he was Black. They have all pleaded not guilty. FBI analyst Amy Vaughan testified Wednesday that Travis McMichael, the man who shot Arbery, repeatedly used the N-word and other racist slurs in text messages and social media in the months and years before the killing. They included posts describing violence against Black people.

Coast Guard searches Gulf for missing cruise ship passenger

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Authorities are searching for a missing cruise ship passenger in the Gulf of Mexico. The Coast Guard said it received a called Wednesday afternoon that a 32-year-old African American woman had fallen overboard from the Carnival Valor cruise ship about 150 miles (240 kilometers) offshore of Southwest Pass, Louisiana. Officials did not immediately release additional details.

Asia

S. Korea to give out rapid tests as omicron shatters record

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea will distribute free coronavirus rapid test kits at schools and senior care facilities starting next week as it weathers an unprecedented wave of infections driven by the fast-moving omicron variant.

Health officials on Wednesday reported its highest daily jump in coronavirus infections with 90,443 new cases, shattering the previous one-day record set on Tuesday by more than 33,000 cases. The figure represents more than a 20-fold increase from the levels seen in mid-January, when omicron emerged as the country's dominant strain, and some experts say the country could see daily cases of around 200,000 in March.

While experts say omicron appears less likely to cause serious illness or death compared to the delta variant, which rattled the country in December and early January, hospitalizations have been creeping up amid the greater scale of outbreak.

Prime Minister Kim Boo-kyum, Seoul's No. 2 official behind President Moon Jae-in, said officials will start distributing free rapid test kits next week at kindergartens, elementary schools and senior care facilities, including nursing homes and neighborhood welfare centers, to strengthen protection for unvaccinated children and high-risk groups.

AP

People wait for their coronavirus test at a makeshift testing site in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, Feb. 16, 2022.

Education Minister Yoo Eun-hye said schools will be getting enough kits for students to use twice a week, but added that such tests won't be mandatory.

"We ask for students to be tested at home with the rapid antigen test kits on the evenings of Sunday and Wednesday before coming to school," Yoo said during a briefing. "When testing positive from those tests, please visit the local health office to get PCR (lab) tests."

Health workers have diagnosed a daily average of 60,230 new coronavirus cases in the past seven days, which translates to 116.64 infections per 100,000 people, as the national caseload grew over 1.55 million.

The fast-developing omicron surge has left officials debating whether the country should maintain strict social distancing rules, including a six-person limit on private social gatherings and a 9 p.m. curfew for restaurants.

Struggling business owners have called for the measures to be removed, questioning whether they are meaningful when cases are growing rapidly.

But health experts warn that easing social distancing may allow transmissions to veer further out of control, which would further stretch worn-out health and government workers and threaten high-risk groups and children younger than 12 who have yet to be vaccinated.

The country has already eased quarantine restrictions significantly starting this month to prevent major disruptions at workplaces and essential services, which may occur if huge numbers of people are constantly forced into isolation.

There are also concerns that transmissions could worsen as campaigning and political rallies began on Tuesday ahead of the March 9 presidential elections.

Prime Minister Kim said officials will consider both the pandemic's growing economic strain and threats posed by the omicron surge before announcing new social distancing measures on Friday.

ASIAN BRIEFS

13 die in village well collapse at wedding in India

LUCKNOW, India (AP)—Thirteen women and girls died while singing and dancing at a wedding as a concrete slab covering an abandoned village well collapsed under their weight in northern India, an official said Thursday. Ten other villagers were injured as they also fell into the well and were hospitalized in Kushinagar district in Uttar Pradesh state on Wednesday night, said Magistrate S. Rajalingam. The well was more than 15 meters (50 feet) deep, said Muralidhar Singh, a rescuer. Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a tweet described the incident as heart-rending and prayed for the swift recovery of the injured. Authorities are investigating the incident in the village, which is about 300 kilometers (200 miles) east of Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh state.

2 on death row in Singapore lose appeal, renew legal bid

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Two death row inmates in Singapore lost another appeal Wednesday against their pending execution on the grounds they were mentally disabled, but their family filed a fresh legal bid to save them. Lawyer M.Ravi said Singapore's High Court rejected an application to review the executions that had been scheduled for Wednesday but stayed the order pending an appeal hearing. The cases was immediately heard by the Court of Appeal, which then dismissed the plea, he said. "We have filed another application on the manner the death penalty has been administered in (Singapore) and the various breaches on right to life and unequal treatment," Ravi wrote on Facebook. He said the new hearing was due on Thursday morning. The two men, who were arrested for smuggling drugs into the country, will be the first to be executed since November 2019 if their sentences are upheld.

Myanmar fighter jet crashes into lake, killing pilot

BANGKOK (AP)—A Myanmar fighter jet on Wednesday crashed into a lake in the country's northwest, state-run media reported, blaming the incident on a technical malfunction. The crash took place in a region where there is active combat between Myanmar's army and forces opposed to army rule. The military later said in a statement the pilot had died. State-run MRTV said the plane crashed into a lake 16 kilometers (10 miles) north of the town of Sagaing. The jet lost contact with a military air base at Tada-U in neighboring Mandalay Region at 10:43 a.m. as it was beginning its training maneuvers, the report said. A local rescue worker said body parts found at the crash site were taken away by a military helicopter. He said the crashed plane was a Chinese-made model, painted in the standard blue color favored by the air force. The rescue worker, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media, said there were no reports of casualties on the ground.

Xi urges Hong Kong to get control as COVID-19 cases surge

AP

Patients lie on hospital beds as they wait at a temporary holding area outside Caritas Medical Centre in Hong Kong Wednesday, Feb.16, 2022.

HONG KONG (AP)—Coronavirus patients lay in hospital beds or open-air tens amid record numbers of infections as Hong Kong doggedly adheres to its "zero-COVID" strategy, and China's leader Xi Jinping said the local government's "overriding task" was to control the situation.

Hong Kong is facing its worst outbreak of the pandemic, topping 2,000 new COVID-19 cases each day this week. The city government has already instituted strict rules banning gatherings of more than two households.

But health care facilities are beginning to overflow, and the city's Caritas Medical Center was forced Wednesday to treat some patients in beds outside the building. Others were waiting in tents, some appalled by the government's response to the outbreak.

"The reason why our society has become chaotic like this today is all because of this policy. The organizational skill of the government has made Hong Kong people feel so hopeless," said Daisy Ho, a 70-year-old homemaker.

Xi directed Vice Premier Han Zheng to express to Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam the concerns that Chinese Communist Party leaders have about the city's ongoing outbreak, according to Wen Wei Po, a pro-Beijing news outlet.

Zheng said the Hong Kong government "should earnestly assume the main responsibility and regard the rapid stabilization and control of the epidemic as the current overriding task," the report said.

China's central government agencies and neighboring Guangdong province will provide Hong Kong with resources to fight the outbreak, including rapid antigen tests, medical expertise and supplies, Zheng said.

China has been able to control the virus within its borders by maintaining a strict "zero tolerance" policy that involves total lockdowns, extensive contact tracing and mass testing millions of people. The strategy seeks to contain outbreaks as soon as they are detected.

Lam has stuck to the strategy despite geographical and other differences between Hong Kong and other parts of China. Last week, the entire upscale Discovery Bay neighborhood in Hong Kong was ordered to undergo testing after authorities found traces of the virus in its sewage.

The comments from Xi and Zheng were the latest pressure from Beijing for her to stay the course.

World

Brazil mudslides kill at least 94, with dozens still missing

Rescue workers remove the body of a mudslide victim in Petropolis, Brazil, Wednesday, Feb. 16, 2022. AP

PETROPOLIS, Brazil (AP) — Rio de Janeiro state's government has confirmed 94 deaths from floods and mudslides that swept away homes and cars in the city of Petropolis. But even as families prepared to bury their dead, it was unclear Thursday how many bodies remained trapped in the mud.

Rubens Bomtempo, mayor of the German-influenced city nestled in the mountains, didn't even offer an estimate for the number of people missing, with recovery efforts still ongoing.

"We don't yet know the full scale of this," Bomtempo said at a news conference Wednesday. "It was a hard day, a difficult day."

More than 24 hours after the deadly deluge early Tuesday, survivors were digging to find lost loved ones. Rio de Janeiro's public prosecutors' office said in a statement Wednesday night that it had compiled a list of 35 people yet to be located.

Footage posted on social media showed torrents dragging cars and houses through the streets and water swirling through the city. One video showed two buses sinking into a swollen river as its passengers clambered out the windows, scrambling for safety. Some didn't make it to the banks and were washed away, out of sight.

On Wednesday morning, houses were left buried beneath mud while appliances and cars were in piles on the streets.

Petropolis, named for a former Brazilian emperor, has been a refuge for people escaping the summer heat and tourists keen to explore the so-called "Imperial City."

Its prosperity has also drawn poorer residents from Rio's poorer regions. Its population grew haphazardly, climbing mountainsides now covered with small residences packed tightly together. Many are in areas unfit for structures and made more vulnerable by deforestation and inadequate drainage.

The state fire department said 25.8 centimeters (just over 10 inches) of rain fell within three hours on Tuesday -- almost as much as during the previous 30 days combined. Rio de Janeiro's Gov. Claudio Castro said in a press conference that the rains were the worst Petropolis has received since 1932.

"No one could predict rain as hard as this," Castro said. More rain is expected through the rest of the week, according to weather forecasters.

Castro added that almost 400 people were left homeless and 24 people were recovered alive.

They were fortunate, and they were few.

"I could only hear my brother yelling, 'Help! Help! My God!'" resident Rosilene Virginia told The Associated Press as a man comforted her. "It's very sad to see people asking for help and having no way of helping, no way of doing anything. It's desperate, a feeling of loss so great."

US official: Russia adds 7K more troops near Ukraine border

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Ukrainians defied pressure from Moscow with a national show of flag-waving unity Wednesday, while the U.S. warned that Russia had added as many as 7,000 troops near Ukraine's borders despite Kremlin declarations that forces were being pulled back from the region.

While a Russian invasion of Ukraine did not materialize as feared, the United States and its allies maintained that the threat is still strong, with Europe's security and economic stability in the balance.

Russia has massed more than 150,000 troops east, north and south of Ukraine, according to Western estimates. Russian President Vladimir Putin has signaled that he wants a peaceful path out of the crisis, and U.S. President Joe Biden promised that the U.S. would continue to give diplomacy "every chance," but he struck a skeptical tone about Moscow's intentions. Biden also insisted that Washington and its allies would not "sacrifice basic principles" respecting Ukraine sovereignty.

Russian Defense Ministry video showed a trainload of armored vehicles moving across a bridge away from Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula that Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014. It also announced that more tank units were being loaded on trains to move back to their permanent bases after training exercises.

But at the same time, Russia continued war games near Ukraine's borders and across its vast territory.

A senior U.S. administration official said the West detected that Russia had increased its force near Ukraine by 7,000 troops, with some arriving as recently as Wednesday, and that there had been a marked increase in false claims by Russians that the Kremlin might use as pretext for an invasion.

The official said those claims included reports of unmarked graves of civilians allegedly killed by Ukrainian forces, statements that the U.S. and Ukraine are developing biological or chemical weapons, and claims that the West is funneling in guerrillas to kill Ukrainians.

The official was not authorized to speak publicly about sensitive operations and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity. The official did not provide underlying evidence for the assertions.

The U.S. and Europe are maintaining threats of harsh sanctions. Trust between East and West remains elusive.

"We haven't seen a pullback," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken told ABC News. "He (Putin) can pull the trigger. He can pull it today. He can pull it tomorrow. He can pull it next week. The forces are there if he wants to renew aggression against Ukraine."

9 bodies found, 12 missing in fishing disaster off Canada

BARCELONA, Spain (AP)—Canadian rescuers recovered more bodies from a Spanish fishing ship that sank in rough seas off Newfoundland, raising the confirmed death toll to nine, but the search for 12 missing sailors was called off Wednesday afternoon.

Lt. Cmdr. Brian Owens, spokesperson of the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Halifax, Canada, said all search and rescue aircraft and vessels were returning to base and civilian vessels had been released from their obligation to contribute to the effort.

The fishing boat Villa de Pitanxo, which operated out of northwest Spain's Galicia region, sank early Tuesday 460 kilometers (250 nautical miles) east of Newfoundland, tossing its 24 crew members into icy seas.

Three crew members were rescued and the bodies of nine others were found in the debris site. Owens said teams searched about 900 nautical square miles around the site, but high winds and 10-metre seas impeded the effort amid dwindling hopes of finding any more survivors.

The Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Halifax originally reported late Tuesday that the death toll had risen to 10. On Wednesday, Spain's maritime rescue service said there had been an error in the count and that Canadian officials had lowered it to nine confirmed deaths.

Off the wall

Emotional support or hogwash? Man fights to keep his pet pig

CANAJOHARIE, N.Y. (AP)—Ellie the potbellied pig snuggles up to Wyverne Flatt when he watches TV and sometimes rolls over to let him pet her belly. The 110-pound pig is "family," Flatt says, an emotional support animal who helped him through a divorce and the death of his mother.

Officials in his upstate village of Canajoharie see it very differently. To them, the pig is a farm animal Flatt is harboring in the village illegally.

The case could soon be headed to a criminal trial. But it has already caught the attention of pig partisans who believe the animals should be respected more as companions instead of just a food source.

"I could never dream of giving away somebody who's part of my family," Flatt said recently as he patted the pig in his kitchen. "She's very smart. She's more intelligent than my dogs. I think she can kind of hone in on you when you're feeling bad because she'll want to come in and snuggle with you."

AP

Wyverne Flatt who is fighting to keep his pot-bellied pig Ellie as an emotional support animal poses for a photograph at his home Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2022, in Canajoharie, N.Y.

Ellie is a knee-high Vietnamese potbellied pig with a black coat and hooves that clack on the floor as she walks from her kitchen food dish. Flatt was living in South Carolina when he got the pig in 2018, when she was "about as big as a shoe." She came north with Flatt in 2019 when he moved to Canajoharie, a modest village on the Mohawk River dominated by the husk of the old Beech-Nut food plant.

Flatt, 54, bought a fixer-upper near the business center of the village with plans to remodel it and maybe open restaurant on part of the ground floor. He also has two dogs and two cats.

A village code officer told Flatt he was housing Ellie illegally in October 2019 during a visit for a building permit request. When the village noticed Ellie was still there six months later, Flatt was formally notified he was violating the local code barring farm animals in the village. Violation of a zoning code is a misdemeanor under state law, according to court filings.

Both sides have dug in since then.

Flatt says the village is picking on his pig, which he says is clean and smart. Several of his neighbors have signed affidavits saying they like Ellie.

Village Mayor Jeff Baker said the board has no comment while the court case is pending. But an attorney for the village wrote in a court filing that the pig is a potential public health hazard. She argued that if "every citizen were to openly scoff at the Village zoning codes ... we would live in a lawless society."

Ellie's fate could hinge on federal housing guidance that says municipalities should provide a "reasonable accommodation" when a person can demonstrate an animal provides emotional support for a disability-related need. Flatt's attorney argues that his client meets that test, saying that Ellie allowed Flatt to get off his medication and cope with his anxiety.

The village has argued in court filings it is willing to make reasonable accommodations, but that Flatt never met the standard.

A note from a nurse practitioner saying Ellie helped Flatt get off of medication is in dispute. And while he keeps in his wallet a laminated card illustrated with a headshot of Ellie saying she is a "registered emotional support animal," the village's attorney said it was obtained online for a fee with no formal legal process.

Boat launched by US students lands in Norway

RYE, N.H. (AP)—A small boat launched in October 2020 by some New Hampshire middle school students and containing photos, fall leaves, acorns and state quarters has been found 462 days later—by a sixth grader in Norway.

The 6-foot-long (1.8-meter) Rye Riptides, decorated with artwork from the kids and equipped with a tracking device that went silent for parts of the journey, was found Feb. 1 in Smøla, a small island near Dyrnes, Norway, the Portsmouth Herald reported Monday.

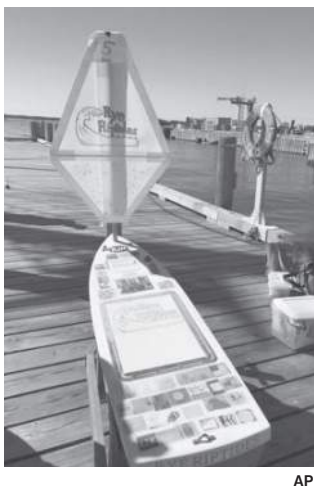
It had lost its hull and keel on the 8,300-mile journey and was covered in gooseneck barnacles, but the deck and cargo hold were still intact. The student who found it, Karel Nuncic, took the boat to his school, and he and his classmates eagerly opened it last week. The school in Norway plans a call with the Rye Junior High students soon.

"When you're sending it out, you have no idea where it's going to end up, how it's going to get there, if it ends up (anywhere) at all," said Cassie Stymiest, executive director of Educational Passages, a Maine nonprofit that began working with the school on the project in 2018. "But these kids, they put their hopes and dreams and wishes into it, and I tend to think sometimes that helps."

The students set the boat out in the Atlantic Ocean and followed its path. They dealt with the retirement of their teacher, Shelia Adams, and long periods when its GPS went quiet.

The boat came back online during hurricane season, registering plot points in August and September around the same latitude as Ireland. Then it vanished again. On Jan. 30, they learned the boat had appeared to hit land just west of a small island in Norway.

"I was surprised the boat actually made it somewhere,"



AP

The miniature boat built by junior high school students in Rye, N.H., sits on a dock, Oct. 9, 2020, in Woods Hole, Mass.

Russian gallery says guard added eyes to avant-garde work

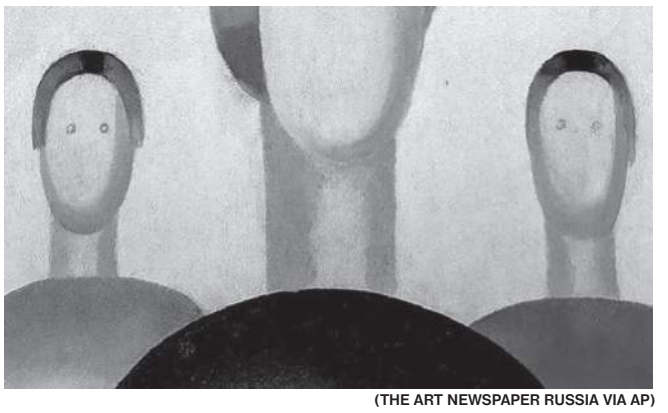
MOSCOW (AP)—A Russian gallery says one of its security guards has vandalized an avant-garde painting on loan from the country's top art repository by drawing eyes on the picture's deliberately featureless faces. It said the damage can be repaired.

The Yeltsin Center in Ekaterinburg said the vandalism of the painting "Three Figures" by Anna Leporskaya occurred Dec. 7. It said the suspected culprit worked for a private company providing security at the gallery.

The painting, dating from the 1930s, shows three torsos and heads with hair but no facial features; the vandal drew eyes on two of them with a ballpoint pen. The Yeltsin Center said the painting has been sent for restoration to the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, which owns it.

The Russian news site RBK said a criminal case has been opened on charges that carry a sentence of up to three months in prison. The picture had been reportedly insured for 74.9 million rubles (roughly $1 million).

Leporskaya, who lived from 1900-1982, was a student of Kazimir Malevich, a seminal Russian abstract artist best known for his 1915 work "Black Square."



(THE ART NEWSPAPER RUSSIA VIA AP)

In this handout photo released by The Art Newspaper Russia on Thursday, Feb. 10, 2022, A fragment of the painting "Three Figures" by Anna Leporskaya after the act of vandalism occurred Dec. 7, 2021 at The Yeltsin Center in Yekaterinburg, Russia. A Russian gallery says one of its security guards has vandalized an avant-garde painting on loan from the country's top art repository by drawing eyes on the picture's deliberately featureless faces.

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

60,000 bees stolen from grocery company's pollinator field

CARLISLE, Pa. (AP)—Nearly 60,000 bees have been stolen from a grocery store company's field in Pennsylvania, the company said. The bees were said to be stolen in Carlisle between Jan. 28 and Jan. 30, Pennlive.com reported Wednesday. In a statement, the Giant Company's community impact manager, Jessica Groves, said that the bees were an essential part of the local food chain that is suffering a declining bee population. "We are extremely disappointed that this happened and are continuing to cooperate with Middlesex Township Police Department," Groves said. In 2021, beekeepers in the state reported a loss of 41% of their populations, which was less than the national average loss of 45.5% of bees between April 2020 and 2021.

Man accused of lifting $25K dinosaur claw at Tucson gem show

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP)—A man has been arrested for allegedly stealing a fossilized dinosaur claw valued at $25,000 from a vendor in Tucson last month and then trying to resell it, according to authorities. The claw was stolen Jan. 30 from a vendor at the city's annual Gem and Mineral Show, Tucson police said. Christopher Thomas, 39, allegedly tried to sell the claw on Feb. 8 to another vendor, who recognized the item and alerted police, police said. The dinosaur claw is now in Colorado with its owner. Thomas faces a felony charge of trafficking stolen property, police said.

Science & Technology

US could see a century's worth of sea rise in just 30 years

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP SCIENCE WRITER

AP

Workers build a sand berm to prevent flooding north of the Balboa Pier during high tide in Newport Beach, Calif., on Thursday, Aug. 19, 2021.

America's coastline will see sea levels rise in the next 30 years by as much as they did in the entire 20th century, with major Eastern cities hit regularly with costly floods even on sunny days, a government report warns.

By 2050, seas lapping against the U.S. shore will be 10 to 12 inches (0.25 to 0.3 meters) higher, with parts of Louisiana and Texas projected to see waters a foot and a half (0.45 meters) higher, according to a 111-page report issued Tuesday by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and six other federal agencies.

"Make no mistake: Sea level rise is upon us," said Nicole LeBoeuf, director of NOAA's National Ocean Service.

The projected increase is especially alarming given that in the 20th century, seas along the Atlantic coast rose at the fastest clip in 2,000 years.

LeBoeuf warned that the cost will be high, pointing out that much of the American economy and 40% of the population are along the coast.

However, the worst of the long-term sea level rise from the melting of ice sheets in Antarctica and Greenland probably won't kick in until after 2100, said ocean service oceanographer William Sweet, the report's lead author.

Warmer water expands, and the melting ice sheets and glaciers adds more water to the worlds oceans.

The report "is the equivalent of NOAA sending a red flag up" about accelerating the rise in sea levels, said University of Wisconsin-Madison geoscientist Andrea Dutton, a specialist in sea level rise who wasn't part of the federal report. The coastal flooding the U.S. is seeing now "will get taken to a whole new level in just a couple of decades."

"We can see this freight train coming from more than a mile away," Dutton said in an email. "The question is whether we continue to let houses slide into the ocean."

Sea level rises more in some places than others because of sinking land, currents and water from ice melt. The U.S. will get slightly more sea level rise than the global average. And the greatest rise in the U.S. will be on the Gulf and East Coasts, while the West Coast and Hawaii will be hit less than average, Sweet said.

For example, between now and 2060, expect almost 25 inches (0.63 meters) of sea level rise in Galveston, Texas, and just under 2 feet (0.6 meters) in St. Petersburg, Florida, while only 9 inches (0.23 inches) in Seattle and 14 inches (0.36 meters) in Los Angeles, the report said.

While higher seas cause much more damage when storms such as hurricanes hit the coast, they are becoming a problem even on sunny days.

Cities such as Miami Beach, Florida; Annapolis, Maryland; and Norfolk, Virginia, already get a few minor "nuisance" floods a year during high tides, but those will be replaced by several "moderate" floods a year by mid-century, ones that cause property damage, the researchers said.

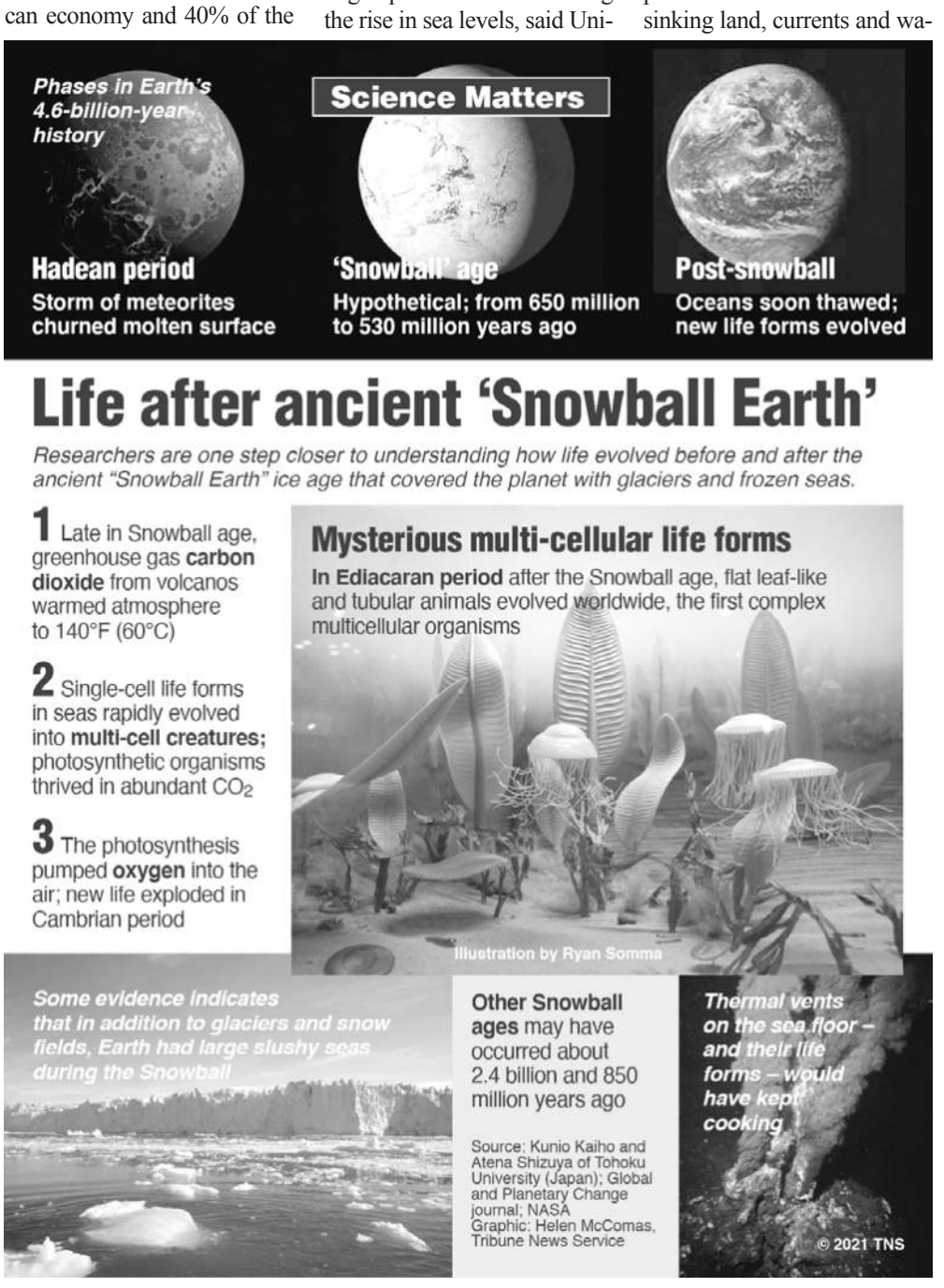
"It's going to be areas that haven't been flooding that are starting to flood," Sweet said in an interview. "Many of our major metropolitan areas on the East Coast are going to be increasingly at risk."

The western Gulf of Mexico coast, should get hit the most with the highest sea level rise—16 to 18 inches (0.4 to 0.45 meters)—by 2050, the report said. And that means more than 10 moderate property-damaging sunny-day floods and one "major" high tide flood event a year.

The eastern Gulf of Mexico should expect 14 to 16 inches (0.35 to 0.4 meters) of sea level rise by 2050 and three moderate sunny-day floods a year. By mid-century, the Southeast coast should get a foot to 14 inches (0.3 to 0.35 meters) of sea level rise and four sunny-day moderate floods a year, while the Northeast coast should get 10 inches to a foot (0.25 to 0.3 meters) of sea level rise and six moderate sunny-day floods a year.

Both the Hawaiian Islands and Southwestern coast should expect 6 to 8 inches (0.15 to 0.2 meters) of sea level rise by mid-century, with the Northwest coast seeing only 4 to 6 inches (0.1 to 0.15 meters). The Pacific coastline will get more than 10 minor nuisance sunny-day floods a year but only about one moderate one a year, with Hawaii getting even less than that.

And that's just until 2050. The report is projecting an average of about 2 feet of sea level rise in the United States—more in the East, less in the West—by the end of the century.


Science Matters
Phases in Earth's 4.6-billion-year history
Hadean period
Storm of meteorites churned molten surface
'Snowball' age
Hypothetical; from 650 million to 530 million years ago
Post-snowball
Oceans soon thawed; new life forms evolved
Life after ancient 'Snowball Earth'
Researchers are one step closer to understanding how life evolved before and after the ancient "Snowball Earth" ice age that covered the planet with glaciers and frozen seas.
1 Late in Snowball age, greenhouse gas carbon dioxide from volcanos warmed atmosphere to 140°F (60°C)
2 Single-cell life forms in seas rapidly evolved into multi-cell creatures; photosynthetic organisms thrived in abundant CO_2
3 The photosynthesis pumped oxygen into the air; new life exploded in Cambrian period
Mysterious multi-cellular life forms
In Ediacaran period after the Snowball age, flat leaf-like and tubular animals evolved worldwide, the first complex multicellular organisms
Illustration by Ryan Somma
Some evidence indicates that in addition to glaciers and snow fields, Earth had large slushy seas during the Snowball
Other Snowball ages may have occurred about 2.4 billion and 850 million years ago
Thermal vents on the sea floor – and their life forms – would have kept cooking
Source: Kunio Kaiho and Atena Shizuya of Tohoku University (Japan); Global and Planetary Change journal; NASA
Graphic: Helen McComas, Tribune News Service
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TECH Q&A: The merits of swapping a PC's hard drive for an SSD memory

By STEVE ALEXANDER
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Steve Alexander covers technology for the Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Readers may write to him at Tech Q&A, 425 Portland Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn. 55488-0002; email: steve.j.alexander@gmail.com. Please include a full name, city and phone number.*

Q: I'm interested in getting an SSD (solid-state drive) with computer-chip memory to replace a mechanical hard disk drive. What are the main differences between SSDs and hard drives?

A: The age of your computer may determine whether you can replace its hard drive with an SSD.

An older computer needs a SATA (Serial Advanced Technology Attachment) connection to link to most SSDs. But there have been several types of SATA connections since the early 2000s, and you'll need a computer repair shop to tell you if your PC has the right one for today's SSDs.

Reasons why you would want an SSD:

■ SSDs are faster because they use flash memory (a computer-chip technology) instead of a rotating disk with a read-write device suspended above it. Some experts say an average SSD reads data about 10 times faster and writes data about 20 times faster than a hard drive.

■ SSDs are a plus for travelers because they're lighter and use less battery power than disk drives.

■ Consumer-priced SSDs now have capacities of 1 terabyte or larger, comparable to disk drives.

■ SSDs have no moving parts, so they're less prone to wear and tear than disk drives are. However, SSDs do wear out because their circuits work only a limited number of times.

■ You don't need to defragment an SSD. Defragmenting a hard drive puts whole files in the same location, cutting down on data access time. Defragging a fast SSD won't speed it up.

Reasons why you wouldn't want an SSD:

■ SSDs are more expensive than disk drives. At best, a 1 terabyte SSD costs about twice as much as comparable disk drive, and some SSD models cost more than that.

■ Even if a hard drive fails, its data is often recoverable from the physical disk. If an SSD fails, its data will probably be lost inside a digital circuit.

■■■

Q: My Windows 10 laptop crashes (I get a blue screen and the PC reboots) when I try to save a file to a USB flash drive. The same flash drive works with other PCs. What's wrong?

A: The cause could be a flash drive format issue, or a security software problem. Today's Windows PCs are formatted with NTFS (New Technology Files System), but the format isn't widely used elsewhere. Flash drives typically use the FAT32 (File Allocation Table32) format, which makes them compatible with the Windows, Mac and Linux computer operating systems as well as smart TVs, cameras and smartphones.

Normally, using a FAT32-formatted flash drive with an NTFS-formatted PC isn't a problem. But an older Windows file called Sysmon (System Monitor) version 11.11 wasn't compatible with the FAT32 format used by flash drives, and it could cause a PC crash when a flash drive was used. The latest version of the Sysmon software (version 13.32), doesn't have this problem. (You can download it at tinyurl.com/yzjr2yj3).

The PC crashing problem also has been linked to flash drives that are encrypted with software from Check Point Software Technologies. Older versions of the software used a file called MeDlpFlt.sysCQ (Media Encryption Data Loss Prevention Filter) that caused the problem (for details, see tinyurl.com/yc7s8e6p). If you use, or previously used, Check Point's software, you'll need to contact the company for help (access to the solution is limited to customers.)

Email tech questions to Steve Alexander at steve.j.alexander@gmail.com. Please include a full name, city and phone number.

Life & Style

Judge blocks release of Bob Saget's autopsy records for now

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—A judge in Florida on Wednesday agreed with a request from the family of comedian Bob Saget and temporarily prohibited the release of any photos, video or other records related to the investigation into his death, saying that doing so would cause them irreparable harm.

Saget's wife, Kelly Rizzo, and his three daughters filed a lawsuit the previous day in Orlando, Florida, asking the state judge for a ruling that would prohibit the release of any records from the local medical examiner's office and the Orange County Sheriff's Office involving the probe into Saget's death.

Circuit Judge Vincent Chiu issued the temporary injunction, saying that Saget's family would suffer "severe mental pain, anguish, and emotional distress" if the request wasn't granted. He said the injunction was in the public's interest as he decides whether the family's privacy concerns outweigh any claims for the records to be released.

Saget

Saget, 65, was found dead Jan. 9 in a room at the Ritz Carlton in Orlando. He had performed in the area the night before as part of a stand-up tour.

The medical examiner said last week that Saget had died from an accidental blow to the head, likely from a backwards fall. An autopsy report showed that Saget had an abrasion on his scalp, a fracture at the base of his skull, fractures around his eye sockets, bleeding between the brain and tissue covering the brain as well as bruises to the brain. A toxicology analysis didn't show any illicit drugs or toxins in Saget's body.

During the course of the autopsy and death investigation, the medical examiner's office and sheriff's office created graphic videos and photos of Saget's body, as well as audio recordings. Such records are prohibited by state law from being released publicly, but some media outlets have already filed requests for them, according to the family's lawsuit.

"Plaintiffs will suffer irreparable harm in the form of extreme mental pain, anguish, and emotional distress if Defendants release the Records in response to public records requests or otherwise disseminate the records for any other reason or purpose," their complaint said.

Judge: Palin libel case jurors knew he'd rejected her claims

NEW YORK (AP)—The judge presiding over the libel lawsuit brought by former vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin against The New York Times said Wednesday that jurors knew before delivering their verdict that he'd already decided to rule against Palin but they said it didn't affect the outcome.

U.S. District Judge Jed Rakoff said in a written order that several jurors told a law clerk after deciding against Palin on Tuesday that they had received news flashes on their phones about Rakoff's Monday announcement that he'd toss out the lawsuit regardless of the verdict.

"The jurors repeatedly assured the Court's law clerk that these notifications had not affected them in any way or played any role whatever in their deliberations," Rakoff wrote.

The judge invited lawyers to speak up if they wanted to challenge the verdict. Besides describing the assurances by jurors that his findings didn't affect their verdict, Rakoff also noted that no lawyers objected to his plan when he told them Monday morning that he'd decide and announce his findings on the case as a matter of law later that day.

He said at the time that he'd let jurors continue deliberating because he expected the case to be appealed and wanted the appeals court to have his ruling as well as the conclusion reached by the jury.

As Rakoff explained to jurors after the verdict was announced, the judge makes decisions based on aspects of the relevant laws as to whether Palin had proven her claims against The Times, while the jury decides the case based on the evidence it hears and views as the trial proceeds.

Palin claimed in her 2017 lawsuit that the newspaper libeled her with an editorial about gun control published after a Republican congressman was wounded that same year when a man with a history of anti-GOP activity fired on a Congressional baseball team practice in Washington.

In the editorial, The Times wrote that Palin's political action committee had contributed to an atmosphere of violence by circulating a map of electoral districts that put 20 Democrats under stylized crosshairs before a Democratic congresswoman was severely wounded by gunfire in 2011.

'Pose' star Rodriguez to receive GLAAD Media Awards honor

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Pose" star Michaela Jaé "Mj" Rodriguez will be honored at the GLAAD Media Awards for her efforts to advance acceptance for LGBTQ people of color.

Rodriguez, the first transgender woman to receive a lead actress Emmy nomination, will receive the Stephen F. Kolzak Award given to LGBTQ media professionals who counter anti-LGBTQ bias.

"Michaela Jaé Rodriguez is an undeniable talent who is changing the way audiences understand trans people while breaking down barriers for the trans community and LGBTQ people of color within the entertainment industry," GLAAD President and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis said in a statement.

Rodriguez, who earned a Golden Globe Award for her role of Blanca on "Pose," stars in Netflix's Lin-Manuel Miranda-directed film "tick… tick…BOOM!" and is to appear with Maya Rudolph in the announced Apple TV+ series "Loot." She also has an upcoming album release.

Rodriguez will be honored at the April 2 awards ceremony in Los Angeles. The late Kolzak was a prominent casting director who worked to raise awareness in the entertainment industry about discrimination against LGBTQ people and people living with HIV.

AP

Actor Mj Rodriguez attends FX's "Pose" third and finale season premiere in New York on April 29, 2021.

Kevin Costner lobbies Utah for more tax rebates for films

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Kevin Costner, the Academy Award-winning actor-director known for films such as "Dances With Wolves" and the current TV hit "Yellowstone," is lobbying Utah lawmakers to offer more tax rebates to films that choose to shoot in rural parts of the state.

Costner told the Deseret News that he has several movies he would like to film in Utah, but doing so will depend on the outcome of Senate Bill 49, which is currently under consideration in the Utah Legislature.

"My biggest hope is that the state backs SB49 and that dream becomes a reality," he said. "I don't really want to go anywhere else with these five movies."

Utah and other states have increasingly ratcheted up the size of incentives they offer to film and TV productions as part of efforts to compete for their business.

Utah currently offers up to $8.3 million in tax rebates annually to productions that chose to film in the state. Under the Utah Film Commission's Motion Picture Incentive Program, productions can be refunded 20-25% of the taxes they pay on direct production expenditures, including goods, services, wages and income, up to the maximum allowed amount.

Grandmother isn't shy about playing favorites

DEAR ABBY: I am the mother of three wonderful children. My oldest boy (who is from a previous marriage) is 11. My two younger ones are 2 (a girl) and 7 months old (a boy). My mother-in-law, "Nancy," is the grandma of my two younger ones. She is good to all of my children, except for one thing.

Nancy had two daughters and a son, and she has mentioned that she preferred her girls over her boy. Other family members have also mentioned how she plays favorites. She had a favorite child and grandchild before my kids were born. I believe my daughter has now become Nancy's new favorite. She has said it repeatedly, and other people have referred to my daughter as "the new favorite."

Nancy used to bring little toys and clothes over for her all the time, but stopped when I told her she needs to bring gifts for all my children if she's going to continue to bring things. She still buys things for my daughter, but leaves them at her house so when I take the children over there, it's filled with little girl clothes and toys.

Nancy has been in my life for more than two years now, so that's two years of birthdays and holidays with her. I am noticing that she buys my daughter double what she gets for my other children -- double the items and twice the money she's spending. I have considered buying extra things for the boys to make up the difference, but I don't want my daughter to think I am favoring them. Luckily, they aren't old enough yet to really notice this.

Is this something I should address or let go? I have had to address things in the past with Nancy when it comes to the children, and she doesn't take it well. I'm worried that if I do, it will cause problems.

EQUAL LOVING MOM

DEAR MOM: Your thinking is correct. It WILL eventually cause problems—unless another child is born who becomes her next "favorite." Talk with your husband about this. If you do, perhaps he will talk to his mother and get her to change her ways. If, however, it doesn't help, you will have to lay down the law. Repeat what you have already told her and make clear that the children will not be visiting her if they are not treated equally.

***

DEAR ABBY: My niece met a guy. Two months later they got engaged. A week after that, she married him. Now, a year later, she wants to have a wedding. Is this proper? Does she just want a big show and gifts? People are laughing about it, and it is not what I was raised to do. Am I wrong in thinking this is an embarrassment to our family?

PROPER LADY IN NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR PROPER LADY: This is not an embarrassment to your family. It is an embarrassment to your niece. The ship has sailed as far as her fantasy about a "big show and gifts" is concerned. If she wishes to throw a party to celebrate her first anniversary (once the rules about gatherings and social distancing have eased), she should go ahead and do it. But I doubt she will receive anything in addition to warm congratulations.

DEAR ABBY

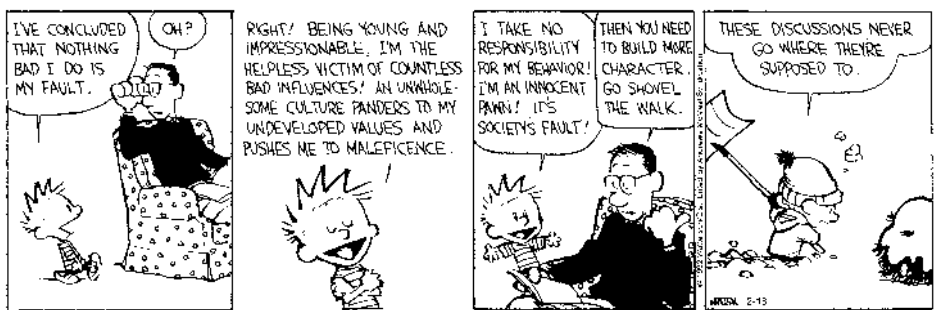
By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


I'VE CONCLUDED THAT NOTHING BAD I DO IS MY FAULT.
OH?
RIGHT! BEING YOUNG AND IMPRESSIONABLE, I'M THE HELPLESS VICTIM OF COUNTLESS BAD INFLUENCES! AN UNWHOLESOME CULTURE PANDERS TO MY UNDEVELOPED VALUES AND PUSHES ME TO MALEFICENCE.
I TAKE NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY BEHAVIOR! I'M AN INNOCENT PAWN! IT'S SOCIETY'S FAULT!
THEN YOU NEED TO BUILD MORE CHARACTER. GO SHOVEL THE WALK.
THESE DISCUSSIONS NEVER GO WHERE THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

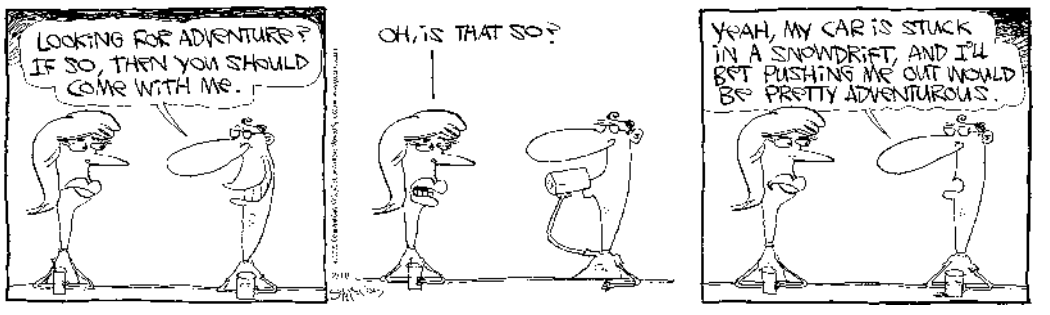
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

CLAYTON!!
GIVE ME A PUSH! THIS SAUCER SLED IS USELESS!
IT JUST SINKS IN THE SNOW!
HERE WE GO!!
WHEE!
NOPE. THAT'S ALL I GOT.
WELL, THAT SMALL NUDGE WAS A REAL RUSH.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


LOOKING FOR ADVENTURE? IF SO, THEN YOU SHOULD COME WITH ME.
OH, IS THAT SO?
YEAH, MY CAR IS STUCK IN A SNOWDRIFT, AND I'LL BET PUSHING ME OUT WOULD BE PRETTY ADVENTUROUS.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Group of seals
4 Skip
8 Sharp tooth
12 Enzyme ending
13 — Ha-shanah
14 Concept
15 Author Dreiser
17 Tiers
18 Deserved
19 Scrap
21 Utter
22 Go over again
26 Some kind of a nut
29 Irritate
30 Eastern path
31 Coup d'—
32 Country star McGraw
33 Skater Lipinski
34 Catchall abbr.
35 "Eureka!"
36 Fragrant wood
37 Human-kind
39 World Cup cheer
40 Lawyers' org.
41 Scale units
45 Distort
48 Actor
50 Pottery oven
51 Ireland
52 Actress Long
53 Thanks-giving veggies
54 Peruse
55 Kreskin's claim

DOWN
1 Top of the head
2 Fed. workplace monitor
3 Woodland grazer
4 Tribula-tion
5 Prone to pouting
6 Medit. nation
7 Math statement
8 Narrow inlet
9 Commo-tion
10 Just out
11 Helium, for one
16 Start
20 "Toy Story" dinosaur
23 Slightly
24 Poet Teasdale
25 Frost
26 Pager sound
27 Diminu-tive suffix
28 Fiesta food
29 By means of
32 Movie house
33 Prepare to drive
35 Priestly garment
36 Not open
38 Chess soldiers
39 Verdi work
42 Prime-time hour
43 Lectern locale
44 Break suddenly
45 Firma-ment
46 Sportage maker
47 Stately tree
49 Hasten

Solution time: 25 mins.

C	O	B	S		F	P	F	F		M	A	C
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			F			R	O	N	C			
H	Y	M	N		D	I			W	E	R	E
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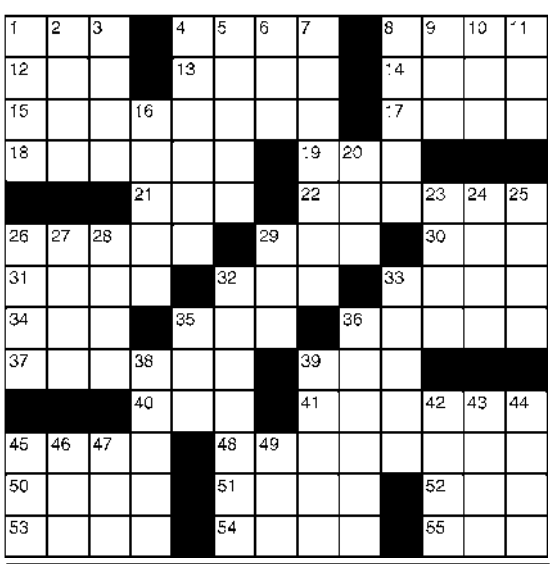
M	U	S	S		L	E	A		H	E	E	D
			O	R	D	E	R		D	A		
G	E	S	S	O			B	O	S	S	E	S
E	C	O		M	A	G	I	C	S	I	C	W
T	R	J		E	M	M	A		L	U	N	A
S	U	P		S	P	A	S		E	T	S	Y

Yesterday's answer 2-18



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Shane Lyons, 34; Molly Ringwald, 54; John Travolta, 68; Yoko Ono, 89.

Happy Birthday: Question your motives before you act. Take the safe path when dealing with health, finances and close relationships. Choose words wisely and let your conscience guide you. Express your thoughts and promote equality. Gravitate to making a unique contribution, a difference to your environment, surroundings and lifestyle. Aspire to reach your goals, look your best and please yourself. Your numbers are 3, 14, 25, 33, 39, 41, 46.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Stick to groups and organizations that share your goals. Aligning yourself with like-minded individuals will help you advance faster. Refuse to let anyone use manipulative tactics to push you in a direction that compromises your beliefs. Stand up for your rights. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Take hold of whatever situation you find yourself in, and use your strengths to push forward. You will gain support if you are direct and honest about your concerns and intentions. Focus on self-improvement, not trying to change others. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Double-check everything before agreeing to participate. Someone will try to take advantage of you if you aren't careful. Use your intelligence, ask questions and don't leave anything to chance. Avoid unpredictable people. ✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Use the power of persuasion, and you will get your way. Show the people around you how you feel, and let them know your intentions. Update your image or appearance, and compliments will come your way. Romance is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* You are a better leader than follower. Don't feel the need to back down or do something you don't want to do because someone is bullying you. Make necessary changes that are within your budget. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Don't be shy. Do what you want to do, and get the response you want. Social events will give you a perfect setting to approach someone who interests you. A unique partnership looks promising. Romance will enhance your personal life. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Be careful how you handle domestic matters. Getting along with the people around you will be challenging and require intellectual finesse, patience and discipline. Take good care of your health and well-being. Avoid gatherings that put you at risk. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Pick up the pace and be optimistic about your future. The right attitude will help you convince others to take a chance on you and support your efforts. A change is overdue, and working alongside someone unique is encouraged. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Keep an open mind, but don't trust anyone who is exaggerating or controlling. Have confidence in yourself and your ability to get things done. If you count on others, you will be disappointed. Be smart when it comes to spending, investments and savings. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* A domestic change will be good investment. There's money to be made and more options to consider. Explore the possibilities, make whatever move necessary to secure your financial position. Love and romance are on the rise. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Discuss sensitive issues with care. The information shared may be used against you. Listen and observe to avoid backing yourself into a corner. You'll accomplish the most if you stick close to home. Take care of your emotional and mental health. ✪✪✪

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20): Pay it forward. Offer to help those who don't share your attributes. For what you put out, you will receive high returns. A partnership will prove to be lucrative and engaging. Be open to suggestions and quick to offer a unique twist. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are playful, secretive and insightful. You are changeable and progressive.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			4			1	
8				7	2		
	6			1			
	3	4		2			
5							6
			6		7	9	
		3				5	
	8	2					1
	9			8			

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/18

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

1	6	8	4	5	9	2	7	3
9	2	7	1	3	8	6	5	4
3	5	4	7	2	6	1	8	9
6	7	9	2	8	5	4	3	1
8	3	1	9	4	7	5	6	2
5	4	2	6	1	3	8	9	7
7	1	5	3	6	4	9	2	8
2	8	3	5	9	1	7	4	6
4	9	6	8	7	2	3	1	5

Difficulty Level ★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

JOHN MADDEN (1936-2021) **Solution: 11 letters**

E	V	I	S	N	E	F	F	O	R	E	L	A	T	E
E	A	N	A	L	Y	S	T	O	B	W	I	N	G	R
T	T	R	C	H	A	M	P	I	O	N	R	N	N	O
T	H	A	L	A	C	E	D	B	O	T	A	A	I	C
I	L	I	A	S	U	I	R	I	S	H	Ⓑ	Ⓞ	Ⓞ	Ⓜ
M	E	D	I	D	W	E	V	V	C	I	E	A	B	C
M	T	E	C	O	P	E	I	I	N	A	C	O	L	A
O	E	R	O	U	R	R	D	D	S	H	O	E	S	L
C	S	S	S	I	G	E	U	E	J	T	E	A	M	L
A	H	T	Z	I	V	C	A	O	H	A	N	D	S	E
R	G	O	N	O	T	S	S	G	I	A	N	T	S	A
E	N	I	L	I	O	E	T	A	C	K	L	E	E	H
E	A	E	O	N	P	N	A	M	H	C	T	I	P	C
R	B	N	C	H	A	L	L	E	N	G	I	N	G	I
E	N	A	S	K	C	I	T	S	M	U	R	D	R	M

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Analyst, Athlete, Bang, Beloved, Boing, Boom, Booth, Career, Challenging, Champion, Change, Coach, Committee, Core, Decal, Drumsticks, Ease, Football, Giants, Hands, Induction, Joseph, Michael, Offensive, Pitchman, Raiders, Relate, Sane, Season, Shoes, Sirius, Social, Super Bowl, Tackle, Team, Verizon, Video Games, Virginia, Win, Woosh

Yesterday's Answer: Mouthpiece

Jo's Jewels Collector's Edition is back by popular demand! Purchase online at www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480.

James fuels Lakers' 4th-quarter rally over Jazz, 106-101

LOS ANGELES (AP)—LeBron James scored 15 of his 33 points in the fourth quarter as the Los Angeles Lakers overcame an injury to Anthony Davis and rallied from a 12-point fourth quarter deficit to defeat the Utah Jazz 106-101 Wednesday night.

Los Angeles trailed 92-80 midway through the fourth quarter before it went on a 19-4 run to snap a three-game losing streak. James had the last 10 points during the rally, including a thunderous dunk off an assist by Russell Westbrook to put the Lakers on top 96-94 with 2:08 remaining.

Mike Conley tied it on a pair of free throws before James put Los Angeles in the lead for good on a 3-pointer with 1:24 left and snap Utah's six-game winning streak.

James has scored 25 points or more in a career-best 23 straight games.

Davis went down with 3 minutes to go in the second quarter with a sprained right ankle. The Lakers said X-rays were negative and that he would receive treatment over the All-Star break.

Davis had 17 points in 17 minutes when he was injured. He was down on the court for several minutes before being helped off. Davis — averaging 23.3 points and 9.1 rebounds — has already missed 21 games this season, including 17 due to a knee injury.

Russell Westbrook had 17 points and seven rebounds while Malik Monk added 13 points.

Donovan Mitchell led Utah with 37 points, including five 3-pointers.

Suns 124, Rockets 121

In Phoenix, Devin Booker scored 24 points, Deandre Ayton added 23 and the NBA-leading Phoenix Suns extended their winning streak to seven games, rallying after Chris Paul was ejected to beat the Houston Rockets 124-121 on Wednesday night.

Phoenix improved to 48-10 heading into the All-Star break. The Suns won despite losing Paul in the third quarter after the star point guard was ejected for arguing and then bumping into an official.

The Rockets fell to 15-42 and have lost six straight. Eric Gordon missed a tightly guarded 3-pointer at the buzzer that could have tied it.

Mikal Bridges added 17 points and seven rebounds for Phoenix.

Nuggets 117, Warriors 116

In San Francisco, Monte Morris hit a 3-pointer over Stephen Curry from the right wing as the buzzer sounded and the basket held up on replay review, sending Denver past Golden State.

Curry hit an off-balance 20-foot jumper over Morris moments before and converted the three-point play with 5.9 seconds left to finish with 25 points.

Splash Brother Klay Thompson scored 16 points and Jordan Poole added 15 off the bench as Golden State settled for a 42-17 record going into the All-Star break.

Nikola Jokic had 35 points and 17 rebounds — 11 and 8 after the first quarter — for Denver. It has won three straight and five of six.

Nets 111, Knicks 106

In New York, rookie Cam Thomas led Brooklyn back from a 28-point deficit with 16 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter, stunning New York

AP

Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James, right, shoots as Utah Jazz guard Jordan Clarkson, center, and Danuel House Jr. defend during the first half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Feb. 16, 2022, in Los Angeles.

Thomas hit a deep 3-pointer to clinch it with 6.8 records remaining, a shot that had Kevin Durant dancing far off the bench in delight. The Nets didn't have Durant or Kyrie Irving, but it didn't matter with Thomas doing a good impression of either All-Star.

Just 2 for 11 through three quarters, Thomas sparked the 15-0 run in the fourth that gave Brooklyn its first lead of the game with just under 4 minutes remaining.

Trail Blazers 123, Grizzlies 119

In Memphis, Tenn., Jusuf Nurkic had 32 points and eight rebounds, Anfernee Simons added 31 points and six assists and Portland overcame Ja Morant's 44-point performance to beat Memphis.

Josh Hart added 22 points, six assists and seven rebounds for the Trail Blazers. They have win four straight.

Pistons 112, Celtics 111

In Boston, Jerami Grant hit the winning basket and scored 24 points to help Detroit end an eight-game losing streak and Boston's nine-game winning streak.

Jayson Tatum had a chance to send the Celtics into the All-Star break on a 10-game roll, but his jumper from the top of the key bounced high off the rim. Tatum scored nine of his 22 points in the fourth quarter.

Cade Cunningham scored 20 points and had a key lock in the final minute in the Pistons' first victory since Jan. 30.

Grant completed the scoring with a jumper from 10 feet with 19.1 seconds left. Cunningham blocked a shot by Jaylen Brown with 8.9 seconds left and the Pistons survived after Boston's Derick White broke-up the inbounds play, giving the Celtics one more shot to extend their streak.

Brown led Boston with 31 points.

Bulls 125, Kings 118

In Chicago, DeMar DeRozan scored 38 points and broke an NBA record set by Hall of Famer Wilt Chamberlain to help Chicago beat Sacramento.

DeRozan, who made 16 of 27 field goals, became the first player in NBA history to score 35 or more points and shoot 50% or better in seven consecutive games. Chamberlain did it in six straight twice — during the 1960-61 and 1962-63 seasons.

Chicago moved a half-game ahead of Miami for the Eastern Conference lead. Coby White set a season high with 31 points and matched one with six 3-pointers.

Hawks 130, Magic 109

In Orlando, Fla., All-Star starter Trae Young had 22 points and six assists and Atlanta routed Orlando.

Young played only 25 minutes after scoring 41 points in Atlanta's home victory over Cleveland on Tuesday night. Bogan Bogdanovic led Atlanta with 23 points. The Hawks made 18 of 32 3-point shots and shot 50% overall.

Cole Anthony led Orlando with 23 points and seven rebounds.

Pacers 113, Wizards 108

In Indianapolis, Tyrese Haliburton had 21 points and 14 assists, Terry Taylor added 18 points and nine rebounds and Indiana beat Washington.

Indiana snapped a season-worst seven-game losing streak as it heads into the All-Star break. Tristan Thompson had a season-high 17 points and six rebounds.

Raptors 103, Timberwolves 91

In Minneapolis, Gary Trent Jr. scored 30 points in his home state, Pascal Siakam added 17 points, eight rebounds and nine assists and Toronto beat Minnesota.

Trent went 5 for 12 from 3-point range and had 10 points in the fourth quarter to help the Raptors win for the ninth time in 11 games.

Spurs 114, Thunder 106

In Oklahoma City, Keldon Johnson scored 22 points and San Antonio beat Oklahoma City.

Jakob Poeltl had 20 points and 17 rebounds, All-Star Dejounte Murray had 18 points, eight assists and seven rebounds, and Lonnie Walker IV added 17 points for the Spurs.

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Poulin leads Canada to Olympic gold in 3-2 win over US

BEIJING (AP)—Canada's Captain Clutch, Marie-Philip Poulin, delivered at the Olympics again.

Poulin scored twice, including her third gold-medal clinching goal, and Canada reclaimed its place atop the women's hockey world by capping its run through the Beijing Games with a 3-2 win over the defending champion United States on Thursday.

Ann-Renee Desbiens stopped 38 shots and Sarah Nurse had a goal and assist in a game where the Canadians built a 3-0 lead and hung on for the win. Nurse set the single tournament record with 18 points.

The Canadians finished 7-0 and spent their time in Beijing showcasing a dynamic, deep and relentless offensive attack to capture their fifth Olympic title in seven tournaments, with four coming against the Americans in what's been one of sports' fiercest and longest-running rivalries.

Just as important, Canada bounced back from a shocking 3-2 shootout gold-medal loss to the U.S. at the 2018 Pyeongchang Games.

Canada can now boast holding both the Olympic and world championship titles at the same time, and for the first time since 2012. The win at Beijing comes nearly six months after Poulin's overtime goal sealed Canada's 3-2 victory over the U.S. at worlds, which ended the Americans' run of winning five consecutive tournament titles.

Hilary Knight, the Americans' only consistent threat in the tournament, scored her team-leading sixth goal on a shorthanded rush to cut the deficit to 3-1. Amanda Kessel scored with 14 seconds remaining during a mad scramble in front for a power-play goal and with the U.S. net empty for an extra attacker.

Alex Cavallini stopped 18 shots in her fourth tournament start.

The Americans, who have two Olympic golds, settled for their fourth silver medal, with all losses coming against Canada.

AP

Canada goalkeeper Ann-Renee Desbiens (35) celebrates as Canada defeats the United States to win the women's gold medal hockey game at the 2022 Winter Olympics, Thursday, Feb. 17, 2022, in Beijing.

Poulin continued playing up to the nickname she earned for scoring decisive goals in big games and especially against the Americans. She scored both goals to seal Canada's 2-0 gold-medal win over the U.S. at the 2010 Vancouver Games. Four years later at Sochi, Poulin scored in overtime to seal the gold-medal win over the Americans again.

Poulin staked the Canadians to a 2-0 lead with 4:34 left in the first period, and then made it 3-0 off an odd-man rush 9:08 into the second period. Nurse drove up the right wing and fed Brianne Jenner, whose slapper was stopped by Cavallini. The rebound caromed to Poulin, who immediately fired a shot from the left of the net and banked it in off Cavallini's skate.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	34	23	.596	—
Boston	34	26	.567	1½
Toronto	32	25	.561	2
Brooklyn	31	27	.534	3½
New York	25	34	.424	10

Southeast Division

Miami	37	21	.638	—
Charlotte	29	30	.492	8½
Atlanta	28	30	.483	9
Washington	26	31	.456	10½
Orlando	13	47	.217	25

Central Division

Chicago	38	21	.644	—
Milwaukee	36	23	.610	2
Cleveland	35	23	.603	2½
Indiana	20	40	.333	18½
Detroit	13	45	.224	24½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Memphis	41	19	.683	—
Dallas	34	24	.586	6
New Orleans	23	35	.397	17
San Antonio	23	36	.390	17½
Houston	15	42	.263	24½

Northwest Division

Utah	36	22	.621	—
Denver	33	25	.569	3
Minnesota	31	28	.525	5½
Portland	25	34	.424	11½
Oklahoma City	18	40	.310	18

Pacific Division

Phoenix	48	10	.828	—
Golden State	42	17	.712	6½
L.A. Clippers	29	31	.483	20
L.A. Lakers	27	31	.466	21
Sacramento	22	38	.367	27

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SNYDER

From Page 24

Snyder is excited and looks forward to coaching the CNMI National Athletics Team for both the Mini Games and Micro Games.

"I am honored in the trust and confidence that Northern Marianas Athletics has placed in me and I look forward to working with all the coaches in the different events as we get ready for the Pacific Mini Games and the Micronesian Games," he said after his appointment to the head coaching gig.

Snyder, who was NMA distance and cross country coach prior to being named national head coach, also gave kudos to the athletics coaches and NMA top brass for all of their efforts in honing CNMI National Athletics Team as they prepare for the Mini Games.

"A big thanks in advance to coaches Elias [Ranagamar], David, [Shamburger], Greg [Iginoef], and Ron [Olopai] who will be instrumental in getting our amazing athletes ready for the Games. Also special thanks to president Robin Sapong and Oceanic Athletics Association for all of their support and to NMA, Northern Marianas Sports Association, and the Games Organizing Committee for all of the hard work they have done, are doing and will do to get us ready to host the Games. Finally, I also need to thank my wife, Kim Church, for supporting me in this new endeavor," he said.

NMA president Ramon "Ray" Tebuteb expressed his thanks to Snyder for accepting the critical role for the benefit of NMA's programs.

"His recent selection to the Oceania Athletics Coaches Association, under the tutelage of our Oceania Athletics Association, certainly accelerates our goals and aspirations to not only our athletes and their family but to our family of committed sponsors. Coach Ron is a shining example of sharing his knowledge and skills from the heart."

Rangamar said he's confident that Snyder has the experience, knowledge, and vision to successfully launch NMA's athletics program to an elite level.

"I look forward to working and supporting Dr. Snyder as we look for NMI Athletics to regain its place as a talented and successful program," he said.

Off the bat, Snyder already is anticipating that the CNMI National Athletics Team will have some difficulty in continuing their training as the Oleai track and field facility is set for renovation.

"We will have some challenges with training as we get our track and field ready for the Pacific Mini Games, but I am thinking that by being creative and flexible with our training we will be able to successfully compete with the athletes across the region, while showing them how hospitable and truly beautiful the NMI is," he said.

Snyder has a doctorate in education from the University of Bath, UK, a level II middle/long distance IAAF coaching certification, and brings over 30 years of coaching experience with a well-traveled coaching resume that includes coaching stints in Europe, Africa, Pakistan, Japan, and the U.S.

NMI

From Page 24

field at 7:30pm when it faces their Guam counterparts—the Matao. Before Saturday's matches, the NMI players will have training sessions in the morning. The morning training sessions will run until Wednesday, while Sunday's schedule will have the NMI U20 battling Guam's U20 crew in the 5pm duel, while the NMI Women's will square off against Guam Masakada in the 7pm tiff.

The NMI and Guam's men's and women's teams will collide anew on Tuesday with the two squads' female players meeting at 4:15pm and the male at 6:15pm. For the last pair of friendlies, the NMI Women's will play Guam's U18 at 4:15pm on Wednesday, while the NMI and Guam's U20 squads will cross paths again in the 6:15pm match.

Continued improvement

Coaches of the NMI national teams welcome the opportunity to train off-island and challenge Guam players as their crew had very limited tournament exposure in the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our players are working hard to try to catch up with international football standard and play in AFC tournaments this year. They make use of their past experiences when they play in international tournaments, so this training camp will be very helpful so we can see where we now. We will evaluate the team and plan what we need to further work on toward the AFC tournaments," said NMIFA technical director and national men's head coach Michiteru Mita.

In the Guam tournament, Mita will be assisted by Jersh Angeles, while Davy Laxa is the team manager.

Mae Ito, who is on the women's coaching staff joining Irish Pagarao, said the camp will give the teams a good platform to show what they have accomplished so far while training under the current challenging conditions.

"The girls and the women have been working and training diligently since our last training camp in 2021. Although we had a few setbacks due to the increase of positive cases in the community, players would always return after completion of their mandatory isolation to continue to improve individually and as a team," Ito said.

"Training camps like this one are vital to the players and the team so that we can evaluate where we are at in terms of team chemistry, skills, and techniques. It is also a reward to players that have committed their time and heart to the team for the past year," she added.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

NMI Men's U20 National Team players perform drills during a training session at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville last month.

JEONG

From Page 24

ter her win.

She said the conditions at Laolao Bay Golf & Resort last Saturday were not so ideal.

"The grass in the course was pretty dry, leading to some of my shots to miss. The weather was windy and cool though."

Jeong, who started playing golf 18 years ago, congratulated everyone for playing a good round of golf. She also gave herself a pat in the back for taking the monthly plum.

"I'm dedicating this win to myself. I won this series because I performed the best out of the participants."

Originally from South Korea, Jeong used to manage a tourist guesthouse before the COVID-19 pandemic severely affected the islands' tourism industry.

Finishing second to Jeong in the February tournament was Nirimai Kobel with her net 76 (88 gross, 45-43), while Yuko Togawa completed the Top 3 with her net 80 (82 gross, 39-43)

A total of 13 golfers took part in the CWGA February tournament. The rest, with their net scores in parenthesis, were Chang Eun Ae (80), Hun "Sunny" Son (81), Sherlyn Jones (81), Lorraine Babauta (82), Lou Kim (82), Flor Jones (83), Sae Hee Kim (86), Jang Eun Ae (86), Kyunga Park (89), and Terry Guerrero (91).

The club continues to look for new members as the new season continues. For those interested in becoming a member of CWGA or for more information, contact CWGA president Yuko Togawa at 287-9856, vice president Lorraine Babauta at 287-0621, or treasurer Lou Kim at 783-7317.

Triple J Motors offers '22 Hyundai Kona N-Line as hole-in-one prize

Triple J Motors has announced that it is offering a brand new 2022 Hyundai Kona N-Line as a hole-in-one prize in the upcoming 17th Annual NMC Foundation Golf Tournament. The golf tournament is scheduled for Saturday, March 19, 2022, at the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort.

"For the past several years, Triple J Motors has supported the College's efforts to raise funds for student programs, facilities, and services," said Sean Ficke, Triple J Motors general manager. "We are excited to be a part of this year's tournament again and wish all the golfers the best of luck!"

The golf tournament is Northern Marianas College's signature event that raises funds to support NMC's academic programs and services.

"Triple J Motors, along with the other Triple J companies, continues to be one of the most ardent supporters of Northern Marianas College," said NMC president Galvin Deleon Guerrero, EdD. "We are extremely grateful for their contribution to this year's tournament and their support for all these years."

NMC's Golf Open will be held on the east course of the Saipan LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort. Showtime is at 6am, and the shotgun start will be at 7am. The tournament will follow a medal play format.

First place winners in the men's Championship, A, B, C, Senior, and Ladies Flights (low gross and low net) will each receive $500, while $300 and $200 will go to the second and third place finishers, respectively. Hole-in-one prizes also include a $5,000 hole-in-one prize from McDonald's and a 2022 Honda Civic from Joeten Motors. The tournament will also feature many other items such as raffle prizes like hotel stays, meals, and much more.

Interested players can still register for the tournament by visiting www.marianas.edu/golf2022 or by emailing NMC Foundation coordinator Carla Sablan at carla.sablan@marianas.edu.

The college is asking companies, organizations, or individuals who are interested in sponsoring holes and/or for any in-kind or cash donation to help support the CNMI's post secondary institution. For more information on how to become a sponsor, please call 237-6780. ***(PR)***

NMC

Triple J Motors has announced that it is offering a brand new 2022 Hyundai Kona N-Line as a hole-in-one prize in the upcoming 17th Annual NMC Foundation Golf Tournament. In photo are NMC students and employees along with NMC president Galvin Deleon Guerrero, EdD, Triple J Motors general manager Sean Ficke, and Triple J Motors representatives.

NMIBF takes 'Bola' to Chinatown

The Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation's Mini Basketball Village Outreach Program dubbed as "Bola" will continue this Saturday at the Chinatown Basketball Court.

The session will run from 4pm to 6pm and interested players in the 12-and-under age group are asked to be at the venue at least 10 minutes before the kick-off to fill out registration and waiver forms. COVID-19 protocols will be implemented to ensure to safety of the participants. Masks and hand sanitizers will be provided.

"We are inviting parents/guardians to come at the Chinatown Basketball Court and bring their children for a two-hour of fun basketball drills and obstacle course games. Our 'Bola" sessions will help their children learn basic hoops skills and participate in physical activities that are essential in building a strong mind and body," NMIBF vice president Dave Apatang said.

"Bola" is NMIBF's play on FIBA's Basketball For Good program. It is supported by the FIBA Oceania and FIBA Foundation and is envisioned to bring basketball to the heart of the community to empower villages and their leaders in running similar programs and instill village pride through sports and community involvement. 'Bola' is held in partnership with the Office of the Governor, the Saipan Mayor's Office, the Office of Youth Affairs, the Division of Youth Services, the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, and DCCA's Sports and Recreation.

Last week, the NMIBF took the program at the Kagman Community Center court, while the remaining "Bola" sessions will be held in San Vicente, As Matuis, and San Antonio. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Children practice dribbling drills with volunteers from the NMI Senior National Team program during the "Bola" session at the Kagman Community Center basketball court last Saturday.

Lion's Club caging unfurls tomorrow

MARK RABAGO

The Game will be one of 12 teams entered in the open division of the SCLC Basketball League's inaugural season set to start tomorrow at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

A total of 18 teams—12 teams in the open division and six in the masters division—will take part in the SCLC Basketball League set to start its inaugural season tomorrow at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

Co-coordinator Boy Garcia said the 12 teams entered in the open division are Alii Blue Haus, Marianas Warriors, The Game, IT&E, HBR Construction, Vizion Insurance, 670 Gravity, JTM, Marianas Dental, Supertech UFO, Lakay Islander, and Pacific Express.

The six teams that will duke it out in the 45-and-over masters division are Blu Haus, DECM, Napa Auto, Marianas Dental, Eagle Construction, and Saipan Magalahi Eagles.

Garcia said all 18 teams will take part in an opening parade where a best muse and best uniform competition will take place. Winners of each category get to take home $100 in cash.

Organized by the Saipan Centennial Lions Club, in cooperation with the Tan Sui Lin Foundation, the SCLC Basketball League is also made possible with help from PC Bargain, Daniel's, BES House of Chicken, Puerto Rico Bento, SM, Smad's, Saipan Ice and Water Co., Villa Luna, Eagle Construction, and RHF Marketing Services.

Earlier, co-coordinator Mikee Guirey said proceeds from the fundraising event will be used for the Lions Club's global causes that include helping curb the prevalence of diabetes and improving the quality of life of those diagnosed with the lifestyle disease.

He also said funds raised will also go to Lion Club's campaign to prevent blindness and improve the quality of life of people who are blind and visually impaired.

SCLC is part of Lions Club International and a chartered club since June 20, 2018 under District 204 Region 2.

10 teams entered in Inaugural Marianas Ekiden

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Team 5 made up of Hiramitsu Ono, Micheteru Mita, Noriko Jim, and Taro Goto was the top Saipan finisher in the Guam Running Club's Ekiden last year.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Run Saipan's Inaugural Marianas Ekiden is all set tomorrow with so far 10 teams signed up for the 21-kilometer relay from Micro Beach in Garapan to just before Pacific Islands Club Saipan in San Antonio and back.

Last year, 11 Saipan teams took part in the Guam Running Club's Ekiden with Team 5 made up of Hiramitsu Ono, Micheteru Mita, Noriko Jim, and Taro Goto coming in first among Saipan teams with a time of 1:33.03.

"We wanted to keep the tradition going of doing long distance relay races. We had a great amount of interest last year as we are doing it this year but as our own race now. Last year we were supporting the Guam Running Club's race," said Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr.

He said the non-profit running club will be entering two teams this year. Others that have so far signed up are Kosuke Sato's team with a different lineup, Trey Dunn and Brad Ruszala's Arguably Descent podcast team, Life in the Son pastor Eric Abragan's team with the rest being raffled off teams.

"This year we are still raffling runners that couldn't make a team or wanted to meet new runners randomly. That's what we pride ourselves with the Ekiden relay raffle system we created from last year. Runners can be randomly drawn into teams and run for fun," said Dela Cruz.

There are 10 more slots available for Run Saipan's Inaugural Marianas Ekiden. To register, click your browsers to https://raceroster.com/.../2022/56932/marianas-ekiden-2022.

James fuels Lakers' 4th-quarter rally over Jazz, 106-101

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Triple J Motors offers '22 Hyundai Kona N-Line as hole-in-one prize

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Snyder named Mini Games athletics coach

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The CNMI National Athletics Team to the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 now has a head coach.

This, after Northern Marianas Athletics named Dr. Ron Snyder as national head coach for the quadrennial meet the CNMI will host for the very first time from June 17 to 25 this year. He will also serve the same position for next year's Micronesian Games in the Marshall Islands.

» SIS headmaster will also lead team in 2023 Micro Games

Snyder will take over from longtime national head Coach Elias Rangamar, who has been appointed NMA development officer. Snyder will begin his new role starting Feb. 22, 2022.

"As the national head coach he will be tasked to lead a new core of athletes in the upcoming Pacific Mini Games happening on Saipan this June and the Micronesian Games next year in the Republic of Marshall Islands," NMA said in a statement.

In appointing Snyder, NMA added that the Saipan International School headmaster and athletics team head coach has a proven track record of successful athletics recruitment, developing competitive programs, and prioritizing athlete/student success.

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MARK RABAGO

Dr. Ron Snyder, center, has been named head coach of the CNMI National Athletics Team to the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022. He is seen here with the rest of the officers of the Northern Marianas Athletics after last year's PSS/NMA Cross Country Championships.

NMI players off to training camp in Guam

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Northern Mariana Islands Football Association coach Angie Ito facilitates a training session for NMI Women's U19 Team goalies last month at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Islands Football Association is sending four teams to Guam for a five-day training camp to bolster their preparations for upcoming tournaments.

The NMI Men's and Men's U20 national teams and the NMI Women's and Girls U18 squads are leaving Saipan this morning and will start their series of intensive training sessions this afternoon at the Guam Football Association National Training Center in Dededo. Nearly 60 players are attending the training camp, which will also include friendly matches against Guam's national teams.

The NMI U18 Women's will see action first in a friendly game against Guam U18 at 5:30 pm tomorrow at the GFA facility, while the NMI Men's will take the

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Jeong wins first ever CWGA monthly tourney

By MARK RABAGO
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Yi Su Jeong got her first victory in CNMI Women's Golf Association monthly tournament after topping the February competition last Feb. 12 at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort's east course.

The 49-year-old ball-striker shot a net score of 76 after taming the greens and fairways of the Kagman golf course with a gross of 85. The 9-handicapper shot a 41 in the front nine and a 44 in the back nine.

"No special feelings. I'm just very happy to win this tournament. I just focused on trying my best during the game," Jeong said af-

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A total of 13 golfers took part in the CNMI Women's Golf Association February tournament held last Feb. 12 at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort's east course.